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SOME ACCOUNT OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

SOME ACCOUNT OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

BY THOMAS INGOLDSBY, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS."

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

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v. 2

SOME ACCOUNT
OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

CHAPTER I.

Ah me ! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron !

HUDIBRAS.

HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE ?—AN APPOINTMENT.—AN AFFAIR
OF SENTIMENT.—AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR.—A STANDING
UP.—A TUMBLING DOWN.

SLEEP, which I had hitherto rarely courted
in vain, refused to visit my eyelids with her
tranquillizing influence, and the grey tints of
twilight, fast flying before a sun that rose in
unclouded majesty, saw me pressing my disor-

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dered pillow in feverish restlessness. I rose and unclosed the window;—the fragrance of morning—of the last morning on which I might ever inhale it—revived me: I resolved to seek, in the open air, and in activity, that refuge from my own thoughts denied me in the more confined atmosphere and retirement of my chamber.

Hastily arranging my dress, I placed on the toilet the letter which I had addressed to my mother, and, forcibly smothering a pang that seized me as the action recalled her image to my mind, descended slowly and cautiously a back staircase which communicated with the offices, and, through them, with the park. My purpose was effected without disturbing any of the inmates of the mansion, who, buried in sleep, dreamed not of the unholy errand on which I stole, like a thief, from the habitation of my fathers.

As I turned an angle of the building, the windows of my mother's apartment caught my eye. The brilliancy of the morning sunbeams, which fell full upon them, rendered scarcely ob-

servable the faint flickerings of the watch-light within, the gleamings of which, now weak, now bursting into momentary brightness, seemed to announce that it was fast sinking in the socket, soon to expire, and be no more.—“ And such,” I whispered, “ may be the brief tenure of my own existence here !—Oh, my mother, if indeed the irrevocable fiat has gone forth, may He who ‘ tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ support thee in the hour of trial, and, by the blessed hope of a future meeting, assuage the poignancy of thy grief for the loss of one, who now invokes thy blessing, as he, from his inmost soul, implores a blessing upon thee !”—A shadow passed across the room between the light and the curtains, and seemed to be approaching the window. Nothing doubting but that it was Martha, who remained in attendance on her mistress, and fearing to be seen at that early hour, I ended my apostrophe abruptly, and rushed into the obscurity of the neighbouring shrubs.

A few moments’ exertion freed me from the thicket in which I had ensconced myself, and

placed me in a path which, winding among shady recesses in a circuitous direction, finally emerged near the end of the avenue that led from the Hall to the high road. As I approached its termination, the appearance of Armitage, hastily advancing with a small mahogany case under his arm, told me that it was time to repair to the place of our appointment. I joined him immediately, and we proceeded forthwith towards the scene of rendezvous.

As we walked along with quick, undeviating footsteps, the good-natured Lieutenant inquired more particularly into the cause of quarrel, hinting at the pleasure it would give him should the matter admit of such an explanation as might allow the affair to be accommodated without prejudice to the feelings or character of either party. This I felt to be impossible, but contented myself with telling the worthy fellow that he was nearly as well acquainted with the real grounds of the dispute as myself; that I merely obeyed the summons of a gentleman, who, as I verily believed, was visiting on

my head the aggression of another ; but that, as my endeavours to convince him of his mistake had been in vain, we must even abide by the decision to which he had thought it necessary to appeal. This account increased the desire, which the Lieutenant had from the very first entertained, of terminating the business without bringing it to the issue of mortal arbitrement ; and he entreated me to permit him, previously to anything else taking place, to use his endeavours to procure an amicable adjustment of a difference, which, after all, as he observed, had evidently originated in mistake.

“ It will be useless, Armitage,” I replied ; “ nevertheless, act as you think proper. I know you too well to fear that my honour will suffer in your hands ; but, from the terms in which his invitation is couched, I am convinced my gentleman will not be satisfied without burning a little gunpowder.”

“ Is he so determined an enemy ? Pray, what sort of a person is your antagonist ?”

“ Upon my word, that is rather a puzzling question, as I am not quite sure that I ever set

eyes upon him in my life. He holds a commission in the dragoons, however, and that is all I can tell you, being almost all I know of him myself."

"It is altogether a very extraordinary affair," returned Armitage. "You shall not fight, however, if I can prevent it;—but stay,—here is the old chapel, and yonder, if I mistake not, come our men."

He was right;—a few seconds brought us together; Captain Maberly and his friend advanced from an adjoining field, the latter wrapped up in a large *surtout*, which he unfolded as we drew near, and revealed the person of my fellow-passenger on the mail, whom I had pulled out of the river two days before.

I cannot say that I was altogether unprepared for this recognition; the possibility of it had more than once occurred to my mind since Maberly's visit, and the supposition had acquired additional weight from some passages in his letter, which I found it otherwise difficult to comprehend; still I had some doubts on the subject, as I could scarcely believe it

possible that the most sanguinary of mankind would, whatever his primary intentions might have been, persist in raising his hand to deprive that man of life who had so recently preserved his own, and that too in a quarrel in which he could feel but little personal interest—but little interest?—A thought flashed upon my mind with the rapidity of lightning, and dissipated in an instant the reluctance I had hitherto felt to commence hostilities.—Amelia Stafford—for her he had come to contend, and her he was determined to possess, though the removal of so formidable an obstacle as myself, by any means, might be a necessary preliminary.—She was the object of his, perhaps mercenary, attachment.—She whom he had rescued from a plot contrived, in all probability by himself, and which my death was indispensable to conceal from eventual detection!—This indeed presented a ready solution to the mystery;—as the champion of her cause, and the avenger of her injuries, he would stand on a proud eminence, and challenge her love with a powerful, perhaps irresistible, claim; while in my de-

struction he would not only lay the foundation of his own hopes, but obtain the removal of a rival, doubly dangerous from the well-known wishes of her father in my favour, and the power I must inevitably possess of unmasking him to Lord Manningham, a single interview with whom might be sufficient to level with the dust the flimsy superstructure which his arts had raised.—That the whole personation of myself, the elopement, and pretended rescue, were but parts of a systematic and villanous plot, of which my destruction was to furnish the *dénouement*, I no longer entertained a doubt, and the indignation which this conviction gave rise to in my mind, operated so strongly upon me, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could restrain my impatience, while our seconds were arranging the necessary preliminaries. I burned to chastise the villany which I fancied I had detected, and to inflict a severe retribution for my defeated pretensions and vilified character.

While Armitage and Maberly, who had retired a few paces apart, were preparing the weapons, and conferring on the business which

had brought us together, Major Fortescue remained at a short distance from me, leaning against a tree.

His face was pale,—almost livid, his air abstracted, and he appeared to be labouring under the deepest dejection. He had raised his hat to me when we first met, and seemed as if wishing to address me; but, enraged at his ingratitude and hypocrisy, I showed no corresponding inclination, and he accordingly renounced his intention, if indeed he had ever entertained it. His eyes were now fixed upon the ground, his arms folded across his breast, which heaved high at intervals, as if from the effect of some strong internal emotion. I turned from gazing on him to watch the motions of our two “friends”—so we term the people who load the pistols that are to blow our brains out—they were now deeply engaged in conversation.

In a few moments Maberly quitted his companion, and, rejoining Fortescue, made a communication to him; a short but animated discussion took place between them, at the close

of which Maberly returned to my "friend," who, after listening to him for a few moments, stepped up to me and informed me that he was the bearer of a proposal from Major Fortescue, who, from the great reluctance which he felt to proceed against one from whom he had recently received so great an obligation, was prepared, he said, to drop the dispute, and consent to sink the past in oblivion, provided I would offer such an apology to Miss Stafford as he should feel warranted in recommending her to accept.

"Tell Major Fortescue," I exclaimed, half-choked with passion, "that the most ample concessions *he* could offer to *me* would now be insufficient to appease the sense of injury which I feel, or to avert the vengeance I am determined to exact.—Let him take his ground!"

Armitage retired in silence, and proceeded to measure out twelve paces, at either extremity of which my antagonist and myself took our stations; the weapons were delivered to us, and Maberly having given the signal by dropping his handkerchief, each discharged his pistol

at the same instant.—Fortescue's aim was but too correct ; his ball struck me, and I fell ; the blood flowed copiously from my breast, and in a few moments I became totally insensible to all that was passing around me.

CHAPTER II.

There's honor for you !

SHAKSPERE.

No bones broke, but sore pepper'd !

MIDAS.

“ ENOUGH IS AS GOOD AS A FEAST.”—A SUDDEN ILLNESS,
—A SLOW RECOVERY.—“ GETTING ONE'S GRUEL ” META-
PHORICALLY—LITERALLY.—THERE'S LIFE IN A MUSCLE.

ON recovering my senses, I found myself stretched upon a flock bed, in a neighbouring cottage to which I had been conveyed, and supported in the arms of Armitage, whose manly countenance expressed the joy he felt at seeing those eyes re-opening to the light of day which he had believed to be closed for ever.

Drench, accompanied by an assistant, was

standing near, occupied in examining the wound, preparatory to an attempt he was about to make at extracting the ball, which, having entered the higher part of my right breast, had glanced against and broken the collar-bone, finally taking up its quarters in the upper part of the shoulder near the neck.

The operation was a long and painful one, and I more than once relapsed into a state similar to that from which I had so lately emerged before the surgeon's endeavours were crowned with success. The bullet, however, was at length dislodged from its asylum, and made its appearance, together with a fragment of my waistcoat, which had very lovingly accompanied it in its progress. Drench announced his prize in a tone which betokened the satisfaction he felt at its extraction, adding that, notwithstanding the great effusion of blood which had taken place, he saw at present no reason to apprehend any ultimate danger from the wound,—though it was certainly a severe one,—provided a strict attention to regimen, and to the medicines he should prescribe for the

purpose of guarding against the access of fever, was rigidly observed.

This opinion, most oracularly pronounced, seemed to give great satisfaction to some one present, though, so qualified, it amounted in effect to little more than that pronounced by Fielding's model for all diplomatists—

“ Indeed, I cannot positively say,

But, as near as I can guess—I cannot tell.”

“ Powers of Heaven ! accept my thanks ! ” exclaimed a voice from an obscure corner of the apartment, in the tones of which I had no difficulty in recognising those of Fortescue.

A tattered curtain of the coarsest materials, which hung at the side of my humble couch, had hitherto concealed him from my view. I made an effort to draw it aside, but the pain occasioned by the motion compelled me to desist. The friendly Lieutenant, whose attentions had throughout been unintermitting, saw my purpose, and accomplished it for me. My eye rested upon my late antagonist, who, perceiving that I was aware of his presence, advanced slowly, and placed himself at the foot of the bed.

As I marked the agony depicted on his countenance, a doubt as to the truth of my late suspicions sprang up in my mind, and I could not help confessing to myself that his agitation bore every sign of being the genuine emanation of his heart. If it were assumed, and merely the fictitious display of a concern foreign to his feelings, he must be indeed the prince of hypocrites; yet, supposing it real, how could I reconcile its existence with the line of conduct he had pursued?

While I hesitated, his eye sank under the steadfast gaze of mine, and, uttering a deep sigh, he walked round the bed until he reached my pillow, when, bending over me, he took my hand.

“Stafford!” he exclaimed in a voice of almost awful solemnity, “how deeply I lament the issue of this affair, no one, but the unseen Being whose behests I have obeyed, can truly witness. Could you but see my heart, however, you would confess that your situation is Paradise compared with mine, and you would look on me with pity rather than resentment. Hea-

ven alone knows how fervently I have prayed to be spared this deed, and, even at the risk of my soul's happiness, would I have avoided it, could you have been prevailed upon to make the only atonement in your power."

I cannot describe the disgust I felt at what I again began to consider the cool impudence of this declaration. "Cease, Major Fortescue," I replied, "your hypocritical condolences on an evil of your own creating, nor add insult to injury. You have played your part hitherto triumphantly, but be not too secure; the time will come, I doubt not, when I shall be able to unmask your motives, as well as those of the villain who has assumed my name to perpetrate an act, which you still persist in charging upon me. A single interview with Lord Manningham will suffice to overthrow your machinations, and to convince him, by the evidence of his own eyes, of the imposition which has been practised upon him.—Leave me, Sir;—I neither need your affected sympathy, nor desire your presence."

The earnestness of my manner appeared to

make an impression upon him; once again he raised his penetrating eye to mine, as he repeated, in an under tone, the word "Imposition," and seemed as if he would read my very soul,—“ Imposition!” he continued, with an incredulous but melancholy movement of the head—“ Oh, that it were possible!—but it cannot be—Lord Manningham and his lovely daughter could neither be themselves deceived, nor would they practise such a deception upon me.”

“ Of the latter fact I am very well satisfied,” retorted I; “but that they have themselves been grossly, infamously deceived, I reassert. That you, Sir, have laboured under a similar delusion I by no means take upon me to maintain; and, but that I believe the information to be, as far as you are concerned, unnecessary, I would repeat, that with Lord Manningham I have never yet exchanged a single syllable.”

“ Gracious Heaven! what would you insinuate?—Is it—can it be possible that there *may* have been an error!—If so, what then am I?—But no! It is *not* possible—Lord Manningham himself assured me”——

“That a scoundrel,” interrupted I, staggered in my opinion by his manner, “had introduced himself into his house, and had endeavoured to carry off his daughter; but Lord Manningham could not know that his nephew’s carelessness, in suffering a letter to be purloined from him, afforded an easy opportunity to the thief, or his confederates, of palming on him a fictitious relation, and of nearly making his Amelia the prey of a swindler.”

Never shall I forget the expression of Fortescue’s countenance as I finished;—surprise, distrust, and horror appeared to be contending within him for the mastery. “What am I to believe?” cried he at length, but in a voice faltering and scarcely articulate, then—changing at once to deep sepulchral hoarseness, while his figure seemed to dilate to more than its usual magnitude;—“Mr. Stafford,” he continued, “answer me, I conjure you, as a gentleman and a man of honour; and, as you hope for happiness in this world and the next, answer truly!—Are you not the man, who, after meeting Miss Stafford at the theatre, introduced

yourself to her father as his nephew, and eventually carried off the young lady to St. Albans?"

"I am not, so help me Heaven!—That I saw Amelia at the theatre is true, but I was at that time ignorant of her name; I saw her once afterwards descend from a carriage at her father's door, but neither then, nor on any other occasion, previous or subsequent, did I exchange one syllable with her.—Unless the gentleman, who at that time accompanied her, be her father, I have never seen Lord Manningham in my life!"——

The exertion I had used in uttering these words was too much for me, and I sank back, exhausted, on the pillow. Drench immediately interfered, blaming himself for having permitted the conversation to continue so long in my present condition.

"Come, come, gentlemen," cried the doctor, summoning up all his dignity and determination, "I must have no more of this, or my patient will give me the slip after all;—and you, Sir," he added, addressing himself to For-

tescue, "now that this more serious matter is disposed of, let us examine your hurt."

It was now that I, for the first time, perceived that Fortescue also was wounded. His escape had been indeed a narrow one, the bullet from my pistol having grazed his temple, the skin of which it had slightly razed. The wound was, of course, trifling in the extreme, but of that, and indeed of every thing else around him, he appeared to be now altogether unconscious. The proffered assistance of the surgeon he neither accepted nor repulsed, but remained for some moments as in a state of stupefaction, his eyes fixed upon my face with a vacant stare, frightful to behold and almost impossible to describe;—a filmy glassiness obscured their orbs, and gave a ghastliness to their appearance, to be equalled only by that of the fabled Vampire.

He remained as it were rooted to the floor for a few seconds, while Drench was describing the exceeding inconvenience which might have arisen "had the ball taken a direction ever so little more to the left, and fractured the parietal

bone,"—then turned, and abruptly rushed from the cottage.

A chaise, which a son of the peasant whose house we occupied had been despatched to order from the neighbouring town, soon after arrived; into it I was, with some little difficulty, lifted, and, accompanied by Drench and Armitage, who refused to quit me while his attentions could be at all serviceable, I was conveyed at an easy pace to the Hall.

As we slowly rolled along, my thoughts once more reverted from the strange scene which had just passed, to the situation of my mother. I recollected with much uneasiness the letter which I had left for her in my chamber, and trembled with apprehension lest it should have been discovered and delivered according to its address. If so, what severe, and, as I now trusted, unnecessary pangs might I not have caused her!—nay, who could tell how far she might have been affected?—I might be her murderer!—In spite of the prohibitions of the doctor, who enjoined me silence, I could not forbear giving vent to my feelings, and ex-

pressed my alarm with an earnest request that the driver might be directed to accelerate his pace, in the hope of preventing so fatal a catastrophe. This, however, Drench positively refused to accede to, endeavouring to dissipate the uneasiness I could not help feeling by reminding me that it was yet scarcely eight o'clock, and of the utter improbability that any communication would have been made to the invalid at so early an hour, even admitting,—what was very unlikely,—that the letter had as yet been found by the servants.

Happily his prognostics were verified by the event. My very absence had not been noticed, nor had any one entered my room since I quitted it. The chaise was directed round to a back entrance, and I was carried to my chamber, in a different part of the building from that occupied by Mrs. Stafford, without the slightest bustle or disturbance.

Poor old Jennings, with sorrow legibly depicted in his venerable countenance, as the ready tear stood in his eye, undertook to officiate in the capacity of head nurse ; while

Drench assumed the delicate and difficult task of breaking to my mother, as gently as he could, the event which it was impossible to keep altogether from her knowledge, and also of recounting to her the whole history of my proceedings in London, together with the rascally trick played me there, of all which I now felt obliged to make the worthy son of Hippocrates my wondering confidant.—As to my suspicions concerning the principal actor in the farce which had like to have had so tragical a *dénouement*, those I kept closely concealed, for the present, in my own bosom.

Of this arduous commission the little doctor acquitted himself with a degree of skill and caution which deserved the highest praise. My mother was indeed sensibly affected at the intelligence of my mishap, but, when he coupled with it the satisfactory information, that provided common care was observed, nothing more serious than a temporary confinement was now to be apprehended, the assurance of that fact, and his story so completely exonerating me from the charges brought against me, tended

most happily to compose, rather than to excite, her mind; and, however mixed her sensations might be, those of a pleasurable nature evidently gained the preponderance. Indeed, the anxious desire she now felt to see and console me so stimulated her to exertion, and to the shaking off the torpor which had benumbed her faculties, that I have no hesitation in declaring that the circumstance contributed, on the whole, not a little to the re-establishment of her health.

At first her visits, under the regulation of Doctor Drench, were, like those of angels, “few and far between;” but, as her strength improved, and the chances of fever on my side became less to be apprehended, they increased both in their frequency and duration, till, at length, almost all my mother’s time was passed in my apartment.

Several days had elapsed since the duel, and everything, in the language of the infirmary, was going on “as well as could be expected.”—The broken bone had been set without difficulty, and, save that the hæmorrhage had produced a

considerable degree of weakness, which Drench's water-gruel and barley broth (sorry substitutes for the roast-beef dinners I had been in the habit of discussing) did not altogether tend to correct, I was neither in bad health nor in low spirits, when, one evening, as the shadows were lengthening in the setting sun, the sound of a carriage, and an increasing bustle within doors, announced the arrival of some personage of no common importance.

This *distingué* I ventured, and not without reason, to prophesy was Sir Oliver himself, returned from his expedition; and soon the sound of his voice, issuing from the hall and echoing up the great staircase, reflected the greatest credit on my skill in divination.

Miss Pyefinch, who had accompanied my mother to take her tea in the apartment of the invalid, stepped out to inform herself of the cause of the unwonted bustle in the lower regions. She soon came back with the information that the Baronet had arrived, accompanied by two gentlemen and a lady; and that, having earnestly inquired after the state of my health, as well

as that of Mrs. Stafford, the whole party was now ensconced in the Cedar parlour, where the presence of my mother was particularly requested, "provided she felt herself equal to the exertion."

It was a source of no little wonder to me how Sir Oliver could have become acquainted with the events of the preceding week, as, being at the period such a bird of passage, no one had known exactly where to address a letter to him with any probable chance of its coming safely to hand, and consequently none of the family had written to him on the subject; I could only conclude, therefore, that he had picked up the news of my *rencontre* from some gossiping neighbour, as his post-chaise brought him through the town; but, on starting this supposition, Miss Kitty electrified me by replying that, though she knew not where my uncle had gained his information, "there was no post-chaise in the case, as the party had arrived in a handsome travelling barouche, with several outriders in rich liveries."—Eagerly did I inquire the colour of the latter; the answer was, to my

infinite joy, and as I had foreboded—"Green and Gold."—Lord Manningham then was arrived, and the whole of this mysterious affair would now be sifted to the bottom !

The hour subsequent to my mother's quitting my apartment, which she did immediately on receiving Sir Oliver's summons, was, I verily believe, one of the longest ever passed by mortal man. I had not even the poor consolation of indulging my own conjectures in quiet, as my companion, Miss Kitty, became now more than usually voluble in giving vent to her own surmises and remarks ; and, as she was not particularly happy in the brilliancy of the one or the ingenuity of the others, I should at that moment have infinitely preferred the peaceful enjoyment of my own ; this too the rather, as I had already commenced a curious speculation with regard to the identity of "the Lady," whom my informant mentioned as constituting one of the *partie quarrée* in the "handsome travelling barouche."

It is true Miss Pycfinch had been totally silent as to the age and personal appearance

of this traveller of the softer sex, and a feeling, which I did not stop to analyse, prevented my making any inquiries of her upon the subject; but my heart whispered me that it could be no other than Amelia, the fair, the unconscious cause of my late misadventure and present confinement.

Always impatient of restraint, I now regretted it the more seriously, inasmuch as it precluded the possibility of my at once satisfying myself whether these fond anticipations were correct. Nay, but that the deranged state of my toilet was altogether incompatible with the attempt, I much doubt whether my wound alone would have been a consideration sufficiently strong to have prevented my making a trial, at least, of the ability of my legs to support me to the Cedar parlour. At length, to relieve my fidgety impatience, which had risen to such a height as to drive my fair entertainer into a monologue, the sound of some one approaching was heard from the gallery that led to my apartment.

I had half raised myself from the sofa on which I was reclining, in eager expectation

of I hardly knew whom, when, as it drew nearer, the footstep sounded heavily and was evidently that of a man : in a few seconds the door opened, and I fell back into my former position as I beheld—Fortescue !

My surprise at the sight of this very unexpected visitor, at first prevented my observing the very peculiar expression which his features had assumed. I could not, however, help at length remarking the singular and mournful wildness of his manner, as, drawing a chair in silence, he seated himself opposite the sofa, and fixed his full dark, penetrating eyes upon me, with a glance of the keenest scrutiny.

“ It is, it must be so ! ” he at length exclaimed, his sudden and unlooked-for appearance having too much disconcerted me to admit of my addressing him at the moment. “ It must be so,—Mr. Stafford, I greatly fear—fear, did I say ? —hope would have been a more appropriate expression—that I have been greatly, dreadfully deceived, that I have been driven, goaded on, to the perpetration of an act, to you most unjustifiably injurious ; and, oh ! how much more so to my

own peace of mind ! — And yet, if so it be, what am I to think ? — Is this hand never to be free from the stain of blood ? Must I again —”

His lip quivered, and, as he covered his eyes with a tremulous hand, I could perceive that his whole frame was strongly agitated by some internal emotion.

“ Major Fortescue,” I replied, “ your conduct and expressions through the whole of this business have been such as I profess not to be able either to explain or comprehend ; but if the latter, as I presume may be the case, allude to an imposition which, I am half inclined to think, has been practised upon you, know, Sir, that Lord Manningham is now in the house, from whom I shall, I doubt not, receive ample justice, and whose testimony will at once prove the little foundation that has existed for those calumnies which have been fastened upon me. As to any ulterior proceedings, you will use your pleasure. I never did, and never shall, shrink from vindicating my reputation in any way you, or any other person, may think proper to require.”

“Oh, Stafford,” rejoined my singular companion, “how much do you mistake the nature of my feelings towards you! — If my heart bled when I thought myself forced by an irresistible command to point my weapon at the breast of him whom I would gladly have taken to my own, what must it now do when I perceive that he, my preserver, was guiltless of the act which, even if committed by him, would but too surely have failed in justifying me to myself for his destruction? — Lord Manningham is indeed here — here, beyond all question, to convict me of the blackest ingratitude, and to plunge me once more into that ocean of uncertainty and impending crime from which I fondly hoped that I had at length escaped.”

Thus saying, he wrung my hand with a pressure almost amounting to violence, while a cold shuddering showed the strength of the convulsive affection which shook his whole body.

“Strange, incomprehensible man!” I exclaimed; “against whom, then, is this ‘impending crime’ to be directed? or who is that powerful and remorseless instigator, whose sanguinary

behests you find it so impossible to disobey, even when they go to the diabolical extent of depriving a fellow-creature of life? — Who is this fiend? — Is it, can it be possible, that Lord Manningham ——”

“ Oh, no ! no, no ! — Lord Manningham is as innocent of the knowledge as —— . But we are interrupted — no more of this at present. You shall one day know the story — the brief, yet miserable story, of the unhappy being before you ; — and then you will pity, — yes, Stafford, you must pity, though you may not forgive me. — They are here.”

He rose as he uttered these last words ; and, relinquishing the hand which he had hitherto retained, walked to the window, while the opening door exhibited to my view the figure of Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, ushering into the room the well-remembered, venerable, and military-looking personage, whom I had seen alight from the chariot on the eventful morning of my mortifying repulse.

A smile of good-humoured urbanity relieved the serious expression which concern at my

situation appeared to have cast over his countenance, as, advancing into the chamber, he proffered me his hand, saying, without waiting for the Baronet's introduction—

“ Will my dear nephew excuse the petulant and absurd conduct of an old man who ought to have known better ? and forgive the mistake which, through the knavery of a rascal, occasioned him so rude a rejection, in a house the doors of which ought to have flown open of themselves to welcome him ? ”

The air of frank good-humour, by no means devoid of dignity, with which Lord Manningham made his advances, would at once have dissipated any remains of resentment which I might have retained against him, had it been possible for me, with the conviction I now felt that an impudent imposition had been practised upon both of us, to have suffered any such to exist.

My reply was perfectly in accordance with these sentiments ; and a few moments sufficed to put all parties, with the exception of one individual, completely at their ease.

That one was Fortescue,—the eccentric, the inexplicable Fortescue. The address made to me by my noble uncle had evidently convinced him of what indeed he had before, apparently, ceased to doubt, namely, that his vengeance had been misdirected, and levelled against a person in no way implicated in, or responsible for, the villanous transaction which, it seemed, he considered himself commissioned to chastise. Nevertheless, from his demeanour during the conversation which ensued between my two uncles and myself,—a conversation which he witnessed without joining in,—it would have been difficult to determine whether joy or regret was the predominant feeling of his mind at the *éclaircissement* which ensued.

From this colloquy I collected that, immediately on quitting me, my late antagonist, whom my repeated declarations had at last staggered in his belief of my being the insulter of Miss Stafford, had flown, with all the speed good cattle and well-fec'd drivers could exert, to Grosvenor Square, where he found Sir Oliver, then recently arrived in London, in close divan

with Lord Manningham on the very subject he had himself travelled so eagerly to introduce.

The result of their conference was such as to convert the doubts he had already begun to entertain almost into a certainty of his mistake ; the fact, however, turn out as it might, it was soon resolved, should be forthwith ascertained by the evidence of Lord Manningham himself, who, wishing as earnestly as any one to dive at once to the bottom of the mystery which enveloped the whole transaction, readily acquiesced in a proposal made by Fortescue, and strongly seconded by Sir Oliver, that he should, with all convenient speed, accompany the latter to Underdown Hall, and satisfy all parties, by the test of ocular demonstration, whether the person wounded — a word, by the way, which made the good Baronet jump out of his chair as if the seat had been suddenly subjected to the action of an electric conductor — was, or was not, the identical hero of the memorable expedition to St. Albans.

CHAPTER III.

Thrice happy they who tread the sacred ground
Where Learning's joys with Peace serene are found.

SHARPE.

THE LIONS.—SPURS AND SWORDS.—SKULLS AND BONES.—
PRIDE IN A PUNCH-BOWL.—HISTORIC DOUBTS.—AN EPI-
TAPH.—A PRIZE POEM.

SIR OLIVER, whom we left amusing himself with the “lions” at Oxford, had derived, it seems, so much gratification from the scenes there submitted to his view—scenes which, independent of their real beauty, possessed also the seducing charm of novelty to recommend them to his notice—that he was easily persuaded to extend the period which he had originally determined should be the limit of his stay, and to accompany his son to the party

at Oriel, the invitation to which had been the means of introducing Mr. Hanbury to his acquaintance.

With this young gentleman, indeed, Sir Oliver had become much pleased, as he had very good-naturedly devoted a good deal of time to the accompanying him through the University, and pointing out to his notice everything in it that is usually an object of curiosity to strangers.

In this, his voluntarily assumed office, he acted as a most efficient substitute for my Cousin Nicholas, whom the egotistical details in which I have lately indulged have occasioned me too much to neglect.

The strength of this interesting invalid was, as he informed his father, scarcely yet renovated enough to admit of his undergoing the fatigue of "lionizing," though he occasionally attended him on some of his shorter perambulations.

The impression made upon the Baronet's mind by the wonders of Alma Mater was a profound one, and filled him with much veneration for those seats of learning, of which, if

the truth must be told, he had previously entertained a very inadequate, not to say derogatory, idea.

The immense collection of volumes contained in the Bodleian filled him with wonder and amazement, which was not a little heightened when his son informed him, that, in order to obtain even a moderately respectable degree, it was absolutely necessary for the student to make himself master of at least three fourths of their contents. This piece of intelligence, deriving all due weight from the gravity with which it was announced, and the confirmation of Hanbury, struck him with no little awe, or, as Nicholas happily expressed it, "quite conglomerated the Governor's faculties," while it tended much to abate the regret which he had begun to entertain at the recollection of his never having himself prosecuted his studies in a place, the very air of which seemed impregnated with wisdom and science.

The Ashmolean Museum, too, came in for its due share of admiration, with its gloves and spurs of the unhappy Charles the First, its Henry the

Eighth's crystal-hilted sword, and one of the skulls of Oliver Cromwell, the fellow to which is, I am told, preserved with equal care at Naseby,—a smaller one, said to have belonged to him when a little boy, and once in the possession of Sir Ashton Lever, is, I believe generally admitted to be spurious.

These, and other relics of the olden time,—not forgetting the gigantic thigh-bone supposed to have been once the property of Sir Bevis of Hampton,—drew from Sir Oliver a long and interesting dissertation on the manners and usages of the chivalrous ages, which, I much regret for the reader's sake, was not committed to writing on the spot, were it only to preserve certain authentic family anecdotes with which it was interspersed, about sundry illustrious Bullwinkles who flourished in those happy days.

The Baronet could not, however, help expressing his surprise at finding no traces preserved, in this curious repository, of the celebrated brazen head constructed by Roger Bacon, whose history, as delivered to himself by his maternal grand-

mother, he very faithfully recapitulated at large, scouting the idea that the bit of gilded wood, miscalled a Nose, to which I have already alluded, could ever have formed part or parcel of the head in question, though Nicholas quoted Bishop Heber's "Whippiad" * to convince him of the truth of the hypothesis.

The splendid crosier of William of Wykeham attracted his attention much more than the beautiful chapel in which it is preserved; but of all the curious and interesting objects presented to his view, no one article in the whole University, as Sir Oliver several times afterwards took occasion to declare, conveyed to his mind so lively an impression of the "Sublime and Beautiful," as the magnificent amplitude of the "Great Sir Watkin," the pride and glory of Jesus College.

At sight of this most stupendous of all possible punchbowls, my Uncle was absolutely enraptured;—words were too weak to express the

* Where o'er the door in brazen radiance glows
The vast projection of the mystic Nose,
Relic crewhile of Bacon's wonderous arts, &c.

extent of his admiration ; and seldom, indeed, in after days, was his favourite beverage placed before him, without a tear of sympathetic remembrance glistening in his eye, as he made some allusion to its massy splendour.

Nor were Sir Oliver's examinations entirely confined to the precincts of the University ; a hundred hallowed spots in its neighbourhood were explored. The haunted remains of Cumnor, which Sir Walter has since invested with such absorbing interest ;—the chaste shades of Bagley, and the leafy honours of “ Joe Pullen's Tree,”—all underwent his scrutiny ; nor was Godstow forgotten, where, after a hearty luncheon upon spitch-cocked eels, the Baronet had the satisfaction of copying into his own pocket-book, with his own hand, the sole memorial to the fair paramour of our second Henry, which some pious hand has inscribed amidst the ruins where she died.

“ *Hic jacet in terris Rosa mundi, non Rosamunda !
Non redolet, sed olet, quæ redolere solet.*”

It is far from improbable that Sir Oliver,

with all his love for antiquity, might not have troubled himself to copy an inscription of which, in its original language, he did not understand one syllable, had not Nicholas, of whose poetical abilities I have formerly given a pleasing specimen, translated it for him into the vernacular, and recommended that it should be transferred to Miss Pyefinch's Album, in the following distich, composed, as he averred, in the true spirit of the original:—

“ Here doth Fair Rosamond like any peasant lie !

—She once was fragrant, but now smells unpleasantly.”

“ And yet,” said Hanbury, when Sir Oliver had ‘booked it,’ “ there are those who maintain that all our sympathy for the fair Clifford is only so much good feeling thrown away,—that Queen Eleanor, after all, was of the two the more befitting object of it;—they say that the bowl and the dagger are all moonshine, and that the beloved *chère amie* survived by many a good long year the injured wife who is stigmatized as her murderess.”

“ The devil they do ! ” said Sir Oliver.

“ Yes, Sir,” answered Nicholas, “ such is the

scepticism of the age. Modern research, indeed, has upset all our received impressions of English history. Harold was not killed at Hastings, Richard of Bourdeaux at Pontefract, nor Edward the Second at Berkeley castle ;—Henry the Sixth was not killed at all ;—Richard the Third was a well-made man ; his Nephews were never smothered.”—

“ It’s a lie,” cried the Baronet ; “ I’ve seen their ghosts—at the play !”

—“ In short,” continued my Cousin, not noticing the interruption ; “ Romances, ‘ it has been justly observed,’ are Histories which we do *not* believe to be true, while Histories are Romances which we *do* believe to be true ——”

“ I do not believe a word of it,” said my Uncle. “ Do you mean to tell me, Nick, that the Labyrinth, and the Clue, and the Queen, and the Poison, are not all as true as that you are sitting there ?”

The Baronet, if little versed in the lucubrations of Rapsin and Hume, was “ well up ” in “ Robin Hood’s Garland,” “ Rosamond’s Bower,” and the “ Seven Champions of Christendom.”

“ I mean, Sir,” returned the Undergraduate, “ that modern research has gone far to prove the contrary.”

“ Prove it !—you can as soon prove that the moon is made of green cheese, or that I am sitting on the other side of the table ! ”

“ So you are, Sir Oliver,” quoth Nicholas, coolly. “ Logic, my dear Sir, will prove that, or anything else, at Oxford.”

“ That I am on the other side of the table ? ” asked the astounded Baronet.

“ Clearly, Sir ;—for instance,—you admit that the table has two sides.”—

“ Of course.”—

—“ And that I am sitting on one side of it ? ”—

“ Well, puppy ! ”—

“ Then, Sir, you are most decidedly sitting on the other. Logic, my dear Sir, Logic will prove anything ! ”

“ Logic be —— ! ” said Sir Oliver ;—he was conquered but not convinced ; and, like most people in a similar predicament, began to be angry, when Hanbury came to the rescue, and

diverted the storm by volunteering to read for the edification of the party a Poem, which he said he had just sent in as being one of the candidates for the University prize; it commenced —

“ Fronde novâ viridis mea tempora cingo salicti
Cursus dum volvunt annus et una dies,
Si quæris, dubitans, cur sic mea tempora cingo?
Impromptu causa est—Cara Amaryllis abest!” &c.

I shall not inflict the whole of the poem on my readers, merely observing that my Cousin Nicholas, still performing the part of Interpreter, rendered it pathetically into English, as they punted slowly down the stream homewards under the auspices of the redoubted Dan Stewart.—

“ It’s all round my hat I wear the green willow,
All round my hat, for a twelvemonth and a day,—
And if any one asks me the reason why I wear it?
It is because my true love is far, far away!” &c.

CHAPTER IV.

His cogitative faculties immersed
In cogibundity of cogitation !

Chrononhotonthologos.

Sweet's the Love that meets return !

Old Song.

CONSTERNATION.—OBJURGATION.—SEPARATION.—VISITATION.
—PEREGRINATION.—MEDITATION.—EXPLANATION.—RE-
STORATION.—DECLARATION.

AMIDST objects of such interesting speculation, time flew quickly on, till the approach of the vacation, and the Baronet at length prepared to return to London, accompanied by his son, George Hanbury making a third in the post-chaise.

To this young gentleman, as I have already hinted, did Sir Oliver “seriously incline ;” he had, in the simplicity of his heart, become much attached to him, and was not a little glad

of his company ; nor did he fail to give him a pressing invitation to continue their *compagnon de voyage* as far as the Hall, where he promised him a hearty welcome.

Hanbury, in return, expressed himself much pleased with the prospect of paying him a visit in the country, and pledged himself to do so as soon as he should have paid his respects to a maiden aunt, to whom he lay under very great obligations, and who might fancy herself slighted should he fail to pass the first week of the vacation, as usual, at her house in the vicinity of Brighton.

Sir Oliver gave him great credit for his dutiful attention to so respectable a relative, and, before the party reached town, had even granted his consent that my Cousin should accompany him down to Frump Paddock, on the express condition that both the young men should repair to the Hall at the end of the above-named period ; Nicholas at the same time averring, that, no doubt, the invigorating air of the South Downs, and the sea-breezes, would prove of material benefit to his still debilitated

frame, and increase considerably the efficacy of "Huxham's Tincture."

On reaching the metropolis, Sir Oliver drove immediately to our old quarters at the Tavistock, and inquired for me. His surprise was nearly equal to his disappointment at finding that I had left London without waiting his return; nor did these sensations experience any abatement when he had perused the letter which I had left at the bar, with directions that it should be presented to him on his arrival. My good Uncle was indeed completely puzzled by its contents, and, after reading and re-reading it at least half-a-dozen times, remained for full five minutes in a state of self-communing deliberation, which, from some, real or fancied, peculiarity of hue, communicated by its influence to the visage, the world has agreed to particularize by the name of a "brown study."

His mental abstraction was indeed for a time so considerable, as to induce a suspicion among his companions that a nap, which had more than once seemed to meditate an attack upon

him during their journey, had at length succeeded in making his senses captive to its overpowering influence,—the only circumstance which militated against this idea being the want of that musical accompaniment, the harmony of whose tones was usually co-existent with the first approaches of the drowsy deity upon Sir Oliver.

The chain of his ideas—if that expression may be used where concatenation or order there was none—gave way at length before my Cousin Nicholas, who, in his politest manner, offered his father a pinch of snuff. My Uncle took it mechanically, slowly raising his eyes from the fender on which they had been fixed, and staring him full in the face, but without speaking.—Nicholas had emptied the cayenne pepper-caster into his box;—the titillating pungency was productive of the happiest effects; Sir Oliver was roused at once from his “handsome fix;”—he sneezed, and unclosed his lips.

“Why, what, in the d—l’s name, can be the meaning of all this?—‘Circumstances which he

can neither explain nor control.’—‘ Lord Manningham prejudiced ’— why, what does the puppy mean ? ”

“ Upon my word, Sir Oliver,” replied my Cousin, who, from the direction of my Uncle’s eyes as he uttered this ejaculation, supposed,—or chose to suppose,—the query addressed to himself, “ your question is somewhat difficult to answer, and the rather as it is perfectly impossible for me to form a probable conjecture as to its subject ; but if you will allow me to inspect that mysterious epistle, which seems to have given birth to it, I shall be extremely happy to give you every elucidation in my power.”

“ Indeed, Sir, I shall do no such thing ; what business is it of yours, pray ?—but I’ll get to the bottom of it — I *will* have an answer ——.”

“ Before I know the question, Sir ? ”

“ Hold your tongue, you scoundrel, and don’t put me into a passion ; the dog has given me the slip, but I’ll ——”

“ Oh, Sir, is that it ? ” quoth Nicholas ;

“ then, in my humble opinion, Sir Oliver, the best method you can adopt will be to advertise him immediately, with a suitable reward for his recovery ;—d—d careless rascals, these waiters! —I dare say, if the truth was known, they have sold him ;—is it Don or Carlo, Sir, Oliver ? ”

The quickness of my Cousin’s eye enabled him to avoid the sudden impetus of the Baronet’s cane, which would otherwise, in all probability, have produced a serious contusion on his pericranium ;—as it was, the blow spent itself in empty air, but not before it had destroyed in its progress a glass of sherry negus, which, having been unadvisedly placed too near the edge of the table, came within the compass of the parabola described by the walking-stick.

For once this facetious young-gentleman had overshot his mark. Sir Oliver, being far from quicksighted, was not unfrequently taken in, by the serious demeanour of his son and heir, so as to give implicit credit to a gravity too profound to excite his suspicion ; but, on the present occasion, not all the good Baronet’s *bon-*

homic and gullibility, of which, to say the truth, he certainly possessed a very respectable share, could prevent his seeing that Nicholas was indulging his wit at his expense ; and the conviction of this not only occasioned the destruction of the aforesaid rummer of negus, but also of an article by no means less fragile,—to wit, the small remains of patience which the perusal of my “unaccountable” letter had left in Sir Oliver’s possession.

All the influence which young Hanbury had acquired was for a while insufficient to check or divert the storm, the whole fury of which was directed against the head of the audacious and provoking delinquent ; at length, however, his interference prevailed so far as to allay something of the Baronet’s anger, while the remainder was diverted into a different channel, and, by degrees, “in hollow murmurs died away.”

This portion of his wrath Sir Oliver was rather at a loss to find a proper object for ; it appeared pretty clear to him that he had ample reason to be very much offended with somebody,—but whether Lord Manningham or myself was the legitimate

character on whom his wrath ought to devolve, was a point which he found it rather difficult to make up his mind upon at present. One of the two, it was pretty certain, must deserve a considerable degree of vituperation at his hands, and therefore, in order that, through a weak and ill-judged lenity, the real offender might not escape his justice, he scattered his blessings with no sparing hand, and with a tolerably impartial distribution, on the heads of both of us, declaring his fixed determination of calling on the Viscount, the first thing he did in the morning, for the purpose of obtaining from him a categorical explanation of, what he was pleased to term, “my d—d absurdity.”

His first intention was, indeed, to proceed to Grosvenor Square forthwith ; nor was it without some difficulty that he was induced, by the reiterated representations of both his companions, to delay his visit, on the ground that seven o'clock in the afternoon was rather an inconvenient hour to call upon a nobleman, who would by that time, in all probability, be thinking of his dinner.

Sir Oliver yielded rather to the repetition than the justice of these arguments, and at length suffered himself to be so far mollified as to defer his expedition till the following day, when he desired Nicholas to be prepared to accompany him ; but a letter unexpectedly arriving the next morning for Hanbury, written from Frump Paddock, and announcing the sudden indisposition of his revered relative, that exemplary and affectionate young man found it absolutely necessary to depart with all speed into Sussex, carrying with him his estimable friend, at least a couple of hours previous to Sir Oliver's quitting his pillow.

He left, however, a note, inclosed in another from my Cousin Nicholas, stating the unfortunate emergency which had called him so suddenly away, and the impossibility of his depriving himself of the consolations of friendship, should the unhappy malady of his aunt terminate in a manner, the possibility of which he shuddered to contemplate. He added, moreover, that their joint unwillingness to disturb Sir Oliver after so fatiguing a journey, had pre-

vented their personally soliciting a concurrence which they knew he would not refuse, and concluded by promising to rejoin him at the Hall the instant the present alarm should have subsided.

Uncle Bullwinkle hardly knew what to make of all this when the letter was presented to him on his rising, and the strong inclination he again felt to "anathematize," rendered shaving a particularly unpleasant, and somewhat dangerous, operation; the quick contraction and expansion of the muscles about his mouth called for the exercise of all the professional experience and dexterity of the operator, notwithstanding the additional degree of steadiness afforded to his hand by the precautionary grasp of that particular part of the human countenance which gentlemen of his profession alone are allowed to handle with impunity; nor, indeed, could all his care and ability prevent his patient's occasionally absorbing a most unpalatable proportion of suds, when the mouth, he felt so invincible an inclination to open, would, more than once in spite of himself, uncloze during the

rapid evolutions of the brush, as if on purpose to receive the savoury *bonne bouche*.

As soon as my Uncle Oliver was shaved, and had consigned to the recesses of his interior some half dozen eggs and a couple of French rolls, with a proportionate quantity of cold boiled beef and mustard, he proceeded to liquefy the same with half a cup of tea, and a whole quart of ale, a moderate repast, which he contrived to despatch in something less than half-an-hour, or, to use the language of the racing calendar, “performed it with ease in nine-and-twenty minutes,” much to the satisfaction of himself, and the undisguised admiration of the waiters.

Being now in high condition for the work of the day, he began to think of putting into execution his resolve of the preceding evening, and prepared for a visit to Lord Manningham.

At the period of which I am speaking, the luxury of the hackney-chariot, the celerity of the cab, and the economy of the omnibus, were yet sleeping in the womb of Time ; my Uncle’s two shilling fare was, therefore, of necessity performed in one of those shattered and shat-

tering vehicles which modern refinement denominates “a Misery,” in contradistinction to its most elegant rival, the chariot, since, in the nomenclature of fashion, technically designated as “a Swell.”

The coach which conveyed Sir Oliver to Grosvenor Square was one more execrable “than all its tribe,” and no enfranchised debtor, rushing from the melancholy purlieus of the Fleet or the Marshalsea, ever stretched his limbs in greater ecstasy at deliverance from durance vile, than did the Baronet on emerging from his crazy receptacle, which, in imitation of the celebrated and affable Mrs. Gilpin,—though from a motive totally opposed to the one which influenced that exemplary matron,*—he had directed to “draw up some three doors off” the mansion which was to be the limit of his journey.

Lord Manningham, fortunately for the pre-

* The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud!—COWPER.

servation of the Baronet's equanimity, was at home and disengaged ; and his visitor, on sending in his name, was immediately ushered into an elegant breakfast-room, with something more of respect than a supercilious gentleman's gentleman seemed previously disposed to pay to his old-fashioned figure and costume. Here he found his noble host, with his lovely daughter, in the act of concluding a morning's repast, not quite so substantial as that from which he had himself so lately risen.

The frank and cordial reception given him by the Peer, tended not a little to increase the embarrassment under which Sir Oliver laboured, from not having been able to make up his mind as to the precise demeanour which it became him, in his present state of uncertainty, to assume ; but when he received the smiling and affectionate welcome of his beautiful niece, the affair was settled at once, and the air of reserve he had thought it necessary to attempt to put on, (an air no one in this world was less calculated to maintain for five minutes,) vanished immediately. Loaded,

as he was, to the very muzzle, with queries and expostulations, it was some time before he was fairly able to fire a single shot, or get into a discussion of the matter which was uppermost in his mind.

Miss Stafford at length quitted the room, in obedience to a hint from her father, and Sir Oliver disembugued his whole cataract of surprise and wonderment at finding only an inexplicable letter from me, at the hotel, instead of myself, *in propria personâ*, domesticated, as he fully expected I should be, in Grosvenor Square.

If the good Baronet was before puzzled, Lord Manningham's recital of the events declared to have taken place so recently in the family, did not much contribute to disperse the clouds by which he was obfuscated, while his own account of the loss of my first letter of introduction, and his journey to London as the bearer of a second, which, too, it appeared, had never reached its destination, produced in turn full as great an effect upon his auditor, who, to judge by the expression of doubt and surprise visible in his countenance as he steadfastly regarded the

narrator, seemed to be balancing the probabilities, *pro* and *con*, of the sanity of Sir Oliver's intellects.

How long they might have continued in this state of mutual perplexity, it is impossible to say, had not a thundering application at the hall door attracted their attention at this moment, in spite of the interest excited by their debate, when the entrance of a third person upon the scene, and the tidings of which he was the bearer, for a time rendered their "confusion worse confounded."

This interloper was Eustace Fortescue. His arrival was by no means *mal-à-propos*. — Sir Oliver, fully convinced of the physical impossibility of my having acted in the manner laid to my charge, and at the same time confounded by the positive testimony and circumstantial details of his Lordship, had become—a necessary consequence with him whenever he found himself thoroughly mystified—passing wrathful; nor is it to be doubted but that a breach,—perhaps an irreparable one,—might have taken place between my two uncles but for this opportune interruption.

At first, indeed, Fortescue's disclosures had the effect of increasing the irritation of both parties, but soon the alarm which Sir Oliver began to entertain for the life of one so dear to him as I had become, and the newly-awakened fears of Lord Manningham, that an imposition might really have been practised on him, combined to render them both more amenable to the laws of reason.

Sir Oliver, to whom the possibility of the latter circumstance had never suggested itself, had contented himself with briefly denying the whole of his Lordship's story in the aggregate,—or, as he phrased it, “in the lump,”—and the consequent indignation of the Peer at the more than implied doubts of his veracity, together with the rage of the Baronet at the supposed calumnies heaped upon his favourite nephew, now gradually sunk from fever heat to a much more moderate temperature, and the threatened storm subsided into something resembling a calm.

It was eventually agreed that his Lordship's travelling-carriage should be got ready with as much despatch as a due regard to the mutual

convenience of the parties would allow, for the purpose of adjourning that conclave to the spot where alone this intricate and mysterious affair could receive its elucidation.

Terrified at the idea of my danger, Sir Oliver was anxious to start without delay.—Nobly eager to atone for an error he began to anticipate he must have fallen into, and shocked at its melancholy consequences, Lord Manningham was no less desirous of setting out immediately ; but the latter strenuously urged and entreated Fortescue, whose haggard looks evinced the distress of mind and fatigue of body which he had recently undergone, to defer his journey back until exhausted nature should have derived a new supply of vigour from refreshment and repose. In this desire, however, he was vehemently opposed by the object of his solicitude, who declared, with an air of determination which showed the vanity of remonstrance, that no power on earth should induce him to lay his head upon his pillow, until he had ascertained, beyond all dispute, whether I was indeed the most wronged, and he the most ungrateful of mankind.

It was evident that farther opposition would only irritate, without being effectual: Lord Manningham, therefore, gave a reluctant assent to his making one of the party, and at the earnest request of Miss Stafford, she also was allowed to occupy the vacant corner in the carriage.

Commenced under such auspices, it can scarcely be imagined that the journey down to Underdown Hall would be productive of much pleasure or amusement to any individual of the *quartett*, and the whole party must have experienced no inconsiderable degree of relief, when a turning in the road presented to the eye of Amelia a village spire, rising above a tufted knoll, which Sir Oliver announced to be that of the parish church of Underdown.

A few minutes brought them down the avenue of lofty trees which formed the majestic approach to the house, and the worthy Baronet, whose anxiety for me made him forgetful of etiquette in all its branches, sprang from the carriage with more agility than could fairly have been expected from even a foxhunter of his time of life. His

earnest inquiries were, however, so satisfactorily answered, that, checking the strong inclination which he felt to proceed instantly to my apartment, he contented himself with returning to his *compagnons de voyage*, and declaring the good tidings he had heard, as he sorely embarrassed every one of them by encumbering them with his assistance in their descent.

The party had been for some time assembled in the Cedar parlour, and a salutation, not less affecting than sincere, had taken place between my mother, Lord Manningham, and his daughter, before it was perceived that one of the company was missing.

The varied and strong emotions which combined to agitate the bosom of Mrs. Stafford at thus unexpectedly meeting with the only surviving and favourite brother of a husband whose memory was enshrined in her very inmost soul ;—the recollection which unavoidably forced itself upon the mind of that brother, how nearly the widow of his beloved Charles had, from circumstances in which he bore so prominent a part, been deprived of all that now

remained to make life valuable to her,—all conspired to render the interview so painfully pleasing to themselves, and so interesting to those who witnessed it, that some time had elapsed ere Sir Oliver, who first recovered his composure, discovered that Major Fortescue had left the room.

Divining the quarter to which his footsteps would be directed, Lord Manningham moved an immediate adjournment to the sick-room, declaring his impatience to do justice to a nephew, whom he now felt convinced he had so unintentionally contributed to injure, and to obtain his pardon for the annoyance so unwittingly inflicted.

Sir Oliver volunteered to officiate as master of the ceremonies on this interesting occasion; and Sir Robert Chester, or Beau Nash himself, could scarcely have exhibited greater alacrity—I say nothing as to grace—than he did in conducting his noble visitor up the great staircase towards my apartment; nor, although in the course of his progress he had to traverse the whole length of the “Northern Gallery,”

did the kind-hearted old man pause one instant to introduce to his new friend's acquaintance a single one of the illustrious Bullwinkles who smiled or frowned, according to their respective sexes, upon its walls.—Never, I may safely venture to affirm, had a similar mark of inattention to our renowned progenitors taken place since he had filled the dignified post of their representative; and strong, indeed, must have been the impulse of that affection which could carry him, as it did on this occasion, through their ranks at the *pas de charge* with such a listener as Lord Manningham immediately in his wake. A slight motion of one hand did, it is true, direct the eye of the latter to the panoply of the ever glorious Roger; but as the other, at the same instant, turned the handle of the last intervening door, a momentary glance only was permitted to his Lordship before he found himself, as before stated, face to face with the individual respecting whom his sentiments had so recently undergone a second revolution.

Our interview might probably have been prolonged to a much greater extent that it was,

but for the interposition of Drench, who, having called to make his daily visit, declared that the increased action of my pulse rendered a longer continuance of the conversation at present unadvisable.

The departure of my visitors did not, however, immediately produce that return of tranquillity which the Doctor had anticipated; and, with all due respect for my little friend's skill in diagnostics, I am led to believe that the circumstance of my now at last finding myself domiciled under the same roof with her who had laid so forcible a hold on my affections, had at least as great a share in accelerating the current of my blood, as the hearty, not to say boisterous, felicitations of Uncle Oliver, or the milder, but not less interesting, remarks of my newly-found relative.

Miss Manningham herself did not "show" during the whole of that to me long, long day; her "compliments to her cousin" were, however, duly consigned to me through the medium of Miss Pyefinch, and with this trifling manifestation of her remembrance I was compelled

to remain satisfied for the present ; but I cannot flatter the learned advisers of this temporary secession with the success of their experiment, nor dare I assert that my couch was rendered less restless in consequence, or my slumbers earlier or more prolonged.

Such, however, is the domination of mind over matter, that, in spite of an almost sleepless night, I was pronounced on the following morning not to have suffered from the excitement of the preceding day ; on the contrary, Dr. Drench declared me to be decidedly better in every respect, adding, with a very pardonable degree of self-complacency, that he “ perceived the composing draught he had sent in had done me no harm.”

With this his expressed opinion I most cordially agreed ; nor could I, either in truth or gratitude, refuse my assent to the proposition, inasmuch as the draught thus lauded was, together with some four-and-twenty of its fellows “ all in a row,”—and all, no doubt, equally efficacious,—adorning at that very moment the uppermost shelf of a contiguous closet.

The force of sympathy it were heresy to doubt ; the bare glimpse of a medical man will, it is admitted, operate *per se* in many disorders, (among which the toothach stands conspicuous,) so as to produce instantaneous convalescence ; the sight of a “ green and yellow ” dose,—that hue which the Bard has immortalized as the one peculiar to melancholy—had ever a most unaccountable effect upon my nerves ; Martha’s complicity and co-operation had been, with some difficulty, secured ; Miss Pyefinch’s attentions, and lumps of sugar, had been evaded, as well as the jalap, whose unsavoury flavour their sweetness was designed to counteract ; on a good constitution and rigid abstinence I relied for keeping down fever, and,—in utter disregard of that skittle-ground system of the faculty which treats a patient like a nine-pin,—first knocking him down for the purpose of afterwards setting him up again,—persisted in getting well again my own way.

My recovery was proportionably rapid, as little time was wasted in regaining a strength which I had never, to any serious degree, part-

ed with ; while all that was yet wanting, the vivifying smiles of my beautiful cousin more than supplied.

Our first interview, of course, took place in the presence of the “members of the Seniority ;” little room was consequently left for the expression of sentiment on the one side, or sympathy on the other ; but no sooner did my amended health allow me to promenade in the grounds, than I seized with eagerness the first opportunity which presented itself, to assure my fair associate — for Amelia was now become the kind companion of my walks—that there was far “more peril in her eye than twenty of their pistols,—or pestles.”

I recounted to her, with all the ardour of a first, and only love, the sensations I had experienced on our first, and never-to-be-forgotten interview. I assured her of the permanency, as well as the vividness of my flame ; and, having given full vent to my passion in a very respectable ebullition of bombastic prose — I never could compass the poetic flights of Nicholas—received at length my delicious reward, in beholding the

“diamond eyes,” whose brilliancy I had duly adverted to, cast modestly upon the green turf, and the “roseate cheeks” blushing with a ten-fold glow, as the ecstatic reference to “papa” fell from the “ruby lips,” inaudible to any other ears save those of love.

The result of the reference thus kindly given, may be easily anticipated; Lord Manningham, in whose good graces I had risen, perhaps the more rapidly from his previous disappointment, shook me warmly by the hand, and candidly avowed that our union was, of all things, the one nearest to his heart.

The placid smile, which once more resumed its place upon my mother’s countenance, evinced a joy not the less real from being quiet. Sir Oliver rubbed his hands till the friction set them in a fine glow, and farther evinced his satisfaction in a noisy good humour, which, though it sometimes annoyed Amelia, and even myself, it was impossible to find fault with. Even Captain Pyefinch mustered up words sufficient to convey his congratulations in a brief, but emphatic “wish ye all joy,” while his sister incontinently took out

a virgin crowquill — alack ! the ruby-pointed, Rhodio-Perryan pens were then nonentities — and, on a sheet of rose-coloured paper, beautifully embossed round the edges, and highly perfumed with musk, set herself seriously about the task of composing an *epithalamium*. I regret much that I am prevented from delighting my readers with this *morçeau*. The only copy was consumed by an (accidental) fire ; it had, as I remember, a very fair proportion of “ roses ” and “ posies,” and “ blisses ” and “ kisses ; ” but Tom Moore has since thrown all these things completely into the shade.

The interval between “ acceptance,” and the final riveting of the matrimonial fetters, has been, by some styled the happiest portion of our lives ; this is a position which I shall not at present stop to consider. To those who have *not* gone through the probation, the argument would be uninteresting ; to those who *have*, unnecessary. Of the conversations which occupied the attention of my now affianced bride and myself, during our rambles, I shall say nothing, save that in the course of them I found all my

suspicious as to the real author of the "jolly good hoax" played off upon herself and her father, amply confirmed.

She told me that my pseudo representative was the same personage whom she had seen in my company at the theatre; of course, it needed not the description of his vermilion *chevelure*, and picturesque obliquity of vision, to settle the question as to the identity of Nicholas.

Of this pleasant young gentleman we had heard nothing, and the impatience of Sir Oliver on this account vented itself occasionally in angry ejaculations at his prolonged absence, especially after he had himself written to "Frump Paddock," announcing the visit of Lord Manningham to the Hall, and summoning its illustrious heir home, for the purpose of assisting in doing the honours.

The cause of Nicholas's silence and continued stay, I could, of course, well divine; but as I saw no good that could possibly arise from denouncing him, while the discovery of his audacity would assuredly go far to distress and harass my kind Uncle, I resolved not to expose him,

at least for the present ; reserving to myself the privilege of lecturing him pretty handsomely, whenever I might be favoured with his company, and of using the power which my possession of his secret would give me, to restrain his mischievous propensities for the future.

CHAPTER V.

Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered!—

* * * * *

Wife, Children, Servants,—all that could be found!

MACBETH.

There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

HAMLET.

AN IN-COMING LANDLORD.—AN OUT-GOING TENANT.—MURDER AND ARSON.—THE UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL.—AN ESCAPE “NOBODY KNOWS HOW.”—A NURSE AND A NURSELING.—BOYS AND GIRLS.—PHILOSOPHY AND MADNESS.—A “LITTLE GO” FROM OXFORD TO HINDOSTAN.—BATTLE, MURDER, AND SUDDEN DEATH!—THE LIVELIEST CHAPTER IN THE BOOK.

IT was in the course of a long *tête-à-tête* ramble that I first learned from Amelia those particulars of the history of Fortescue with which she was herself acquainted. The father of Eustace, a distant relation of Lady Manning-

ham, had been the proprietor of a small landed estate situate in one of the south-western provinces of the sister island ; the greater part of which, being fond of agricultural pursuits, he kept in his own hands, letting off the remainder to tenants at an easy rent.

In no science, perhaps, has real or fancied improvement made greater progress of late years than in that of husbandry ; and although the substitution of mechanical for manual labour had not then reached the height to which it has since attained, yet enough had already been done to excite among the lower classes of agriculturists a considerable distaste for inventions calculated, as they conceived, to deprive them of employment.

Mr. Fortescue, naturally of a speculative turn of mind, was one of the principal encouragers not only of these ingenious contrivances, but of every new method of managing land which the theorists of the day suggested, partly, perhaps, from a very natural wish to improve a property by no means too large for his expenditure, and partly, perhaps, from the very circumstance that it *was* new, one great

reason for its exciting the dislike and disdain of his Milesian neighbours, many of whom, doubtless, would consider the application of traces to a plough an impious interference with the designs of Providence, which had furnished the horse with a tail to tie it to.

But for one unfortunate circumstance, however, it is questionable whether his new-fangled mode of farming would have experienced any more serious interruption than such as might have proceeded from its own occasional inefficiency ; but this one was unluckily so fraught with mischief, that not only the experiments, but the experimentalist himself, fell at length a sacrifice to it. The patronage which he extended to machinery only made him unpopular — the expulsion of an idle and dissolute tenant cost him his life.

A cottager of the name of Donovan had for many years occupied a small portion of ground under both his father and himself. When, soon after the death of the former, Mr. Fortescue, now in possession of the estate, commenced farming on his own account, this man had stood pre-eminent among those who declared that

“no raal gintleman” would have thought of such a measure, and had ever since nourished towards his new landlord a sentiment of angry dislike, which he had scarcely taken the trouble to conceal.

Donovan himself possessed all the vices of the class to which he belonged, without any of their good qualities—he was idle, dissolute, and revengeful; holding the whole race of Fortescue in detestation as “Cromwellians,” strangers, upstarts, and usurpers of yesterday—alien intruders upon the soil from which the rightful occupants had been expelled.

To feelings of this description it was only necessary that some motives of a personal nature should be added in order to rouse his scarcely slumbering passions, and cause them to explode. These motives, unhappily, were at length not wanting.

The idleness of Donovan, the slovenly state of the land in his occupation, which, by its sterility and miserable appearance, seemed actually to disgrace the rich pastures and highly cultivated fields of his landlord that surrounded them,—

his constant absence at rent-day, and the impossibility of ever extracting a shilling from him but by distraining ; and lastly,—although Fortescue would never have admitted it as a reason,—his open opposition to, and derision of, a favourite drill plough,—at length induced the proprietor, in an evil hour for himself and his family, to eject this unprofitable tenant from his farm, which he forthwith added to the one already retained in his own occupation.

Perhaps it was fortunate for the numerous applicants who desired to be the successors of Donovan in the land, that he did so, as the man had been heard to observe that whoever took “the place” over his head should be at no loss for a housewarming. Certain it is that three months had not elapsed from the date of the ejection alluded to, when the habitation of the unhappy Fortescue was entered at the dead of night by a band of ruffians ; among whom his savage exultation but too plainly displayed Donovan as preeminent, in spite of his besmeared features and the disguise of a smock-frock worn over his other habiliments. Indeed, from

the character and disposition of the man, it may well be doubted whether he would have considered his vengeance as complete had his victim died in ignorance of the hand that struck the blow.

Not to dwell longer on a scene so dreadful and revolting, suffice it to say that the sun, which had gilt with its declining beams the cheerful, comfortable-looking, homestead of Mount Kavenagh, rose on a blackened pile of smoking ruins, from which the scorched remains of the owner were afterwards drawn forth, the skull exhibiting a long and deep fracture, apparently produced by a blow from a scythe or pole-axe. The half-consumed bodies of his young wife and two infant children were subsequently discovered, and all consigned in the same day to one common grave.

Of the domestics, two, who had ventured to raise their hands in defence of "the Master," had also perished; the rest, including the nurse, had saved themselves by flight, the latter bearing with her the young Eustace, but not before the terrified child had witnessed with

horror the destruction of both his parents. His very escape, indeed, appeared a miracle, and could only be accounted for on the presumption, that a story, which came some time afterwards to be whispered about, had its foundation in fact.

This secret tale insinuated that Edith, who so courageously bore away the only surviving scion of her master's stock, was aided in eluding the general massacre of the family by a devoted swain of her own, who had carried his regard for her so far as to become a member of the murderous crew principally, if not solely, for the purpose of preserving his inamorata, and who, finding her obstinate in refusing to fly without her foster-child, assisted her in rescuing him, and gave the pair a temporary asylum in his own cottage.

The truth or falsehood of this account Edith would never directly admit or deny, even to Lady Manningham, who received her and her *protégé*, and in whose family the young Fortescue was thenceforth brought up.

The arm of the law was on this occasion

stretched forth in vain to bring the murderous assassins to condign punishment. Donovan, the only one among them whom Edith could, or would, identify, was nowhere to be found, nor was it until some considerable time had elapsed that intelligence, authentic or fictitious, reached Ireland that he had perished in a vessel which suffered shipwreck on its voyage to America.

The young Fortescue in the meantime was carefully tended and educated by Lord Man-ningham (who acted in every respect as his natural guardian,) along with his own children, of whom he had at that period but two.

Frederic Stafford, then an only son, was delighted with a companion of his own age, while Matilda, the daughter, soon learned to feel for the youthful stranger an affection of even a stronger nature than that which she experienced towards her own more boisterous brother ; and when the two boys, under the superintendence of a private tutor, were at length removed to a public school, it may be doubted whether, in spite of the acknowledged depression pro-

duced among young gentlemen and their mammas by the recurrence of "Black Monday," her little heart were not the saddest in the family.

These feelings were more than returned by the object of them. During all his vacations Matilda was the cherished companion of his walks, his sports, and, to a certain extent, even of his studies; while the more giddy Frederic, an utter stranger to that melancholy pensiveness which, from the fatal night so memorable in his history, had never entirely faded from the countenance of his friend, failed not constantly to rally him on account of what he was in the habit of designating his "apron-string propensities," which so often left himself without the associate he would have preferred in his field-sports and out-of-door amusements.

Time flew rapidly on. Lord Manningham's regiment was ordered on foreign service; and as the place of its destination was one of those colonies, the distance of which from the mother country renders a frequent change of troops expensive and unadvisable, the gallant soldier

made up his mind to bid a long adieu to his family and friends.

To this arrangement, however, his attached wife could by no means be brought to consent. Though occupied by the cares attending a young family, which, since Fortescue's introduction to it, "had increased, and was increasing," she hesitated not to declare her unalterable resolution of accompanying her husband whithersoever his duty might call him. Inwardly rejoicing at a determination which his heart sanctioned while his head disapproved, a but half-reluctant acquiescence was at length wrung from the Viscount by her entreaties, and the whole family embarked together, including Frederic, for whom his father had now procured a commission in his own corps.

Unwilling to be separated from almost all the friends he had ever known, Eustace earnestly entreated to be allowed to accompany them on their voyage; but this his guardian positively refused, as well as his request to be permitted to enter the army at all, till time should decide whether the wish which he now

expressed to that effect were indeed the offspring of a decided preference for a military life, or a mere boyish fancy, hastily and inconsiderately adopted, in the hope of still remaining among the friends and companions of his youth.

Perhaps it might have been better for Fortescue had his inclinations not been at this time thwarted. It is true, that for some time after the departure of the Staffords, he continued to apply himself to his studies with a greater share of industry than was exhibited by nine-tenths of his equals in age, and that he derived from his ability and application much solid and useful information; but it is also true, that, in spite of what our "New Lights" may aver, the fruits of the Tree of knowledge are not all a wholesome description; — many bitter crabs are to be found engrafted among its pippins; and poor Eustace Fortescue gathered but too many of a kind, to minds of a temperament like his own, of all others, perhaps, the most deleterious.

I have already alluded to the serious and

even melancholy turn which his disposition had taken, while yet he was a boy—the natural effect of the catastrophe he had witnessed and so narrowly escaped. The tales of Edith, herself a mine of legendary lore, had not, even in his childhood, tended to diminish his propensity to the sombre and the marvellous; Fetches and Banshees,—the warnings of good angels and the shrieking of bad ones,—“black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey,”—omens, prognostications, and presentiments of death or desolation, with all the mysterious machinery of an invisible world, formed no slight portion of Edith’s creed. The very act which drove her and her foster-child from the paternal hearth, had been as plainly predicted to her as death-watches, dreams, and candle-snuffs could shadow it forth; nor can it be for one moment supposed, that all this valuable stock of information on supernatural subjects should remain a secret from him, whom the very fact of her having saved his life had contributed doubly to endear.

It is true that Lady Manningham, a woman

of strong natural sense and cultivated mind, did much to neutralize this delicious poison, while added years did more. Edith, too, the warm-hearted and affectionate Edith, was called to a world where her fidelity and numerous good qualities would receive their reward before her foster-child had doffed his jacket for that modern *toga virilis*, “the Long-tailed Coat.” * Early impressions, however, once made, are not easily effaced; visionary musings continued occasionally to body forth to his mind’s eye “the

* The recognition of incipient manhood indicated by the donation of this garment has ever been considered a most important and much desiderated event by the ingenuous youth of Britain. It will not perhaps be thought impertinent to the “whereabouts” of my Cousin Nicholas if I venture to subjoin Miss Pyefinch’s celebration of his assumption of the symbol, as extracted from the Album of that votary of the Muses, to which I have before had occasion to allude. It is entitled

NICK’S LONG-TAILED COAT.

Modo sumptâ veste virili.—HOR.

Zooks ! I must woo the Muse to-day,
 Though line before I ’d never wrote ;
 Ask you what theme demands the lay ? —
 OUR NICK HAS GOT A LONG-TAIL’D COAT !!

forms of things unseen ;” nor even in after days could Fortescue ever entirely divest himself of certain undefinable feelings respecting influences and intelligences above mere mortality, and more nearly allied to superstition than to experience.

Whether Eustace might not have eventually

Not the Coatee which Soldiers wear,
Tight button'd up beneath the throat,
But easy,—flowing,—debonair,—
In short a *civil* Long-tail'd Coat !
One smarter you 'll not find in town,
Cut by Nugee, that Snip of note—
A very quiet olive-brown
's the colour of Nick's Long-tail'd Coat !
Gay jackets clothe the stately Pole,
The proud Hungarian, and the Croat,
Yet Esterhazy, on the whole,
Looks smartest in a Long-tail'd Coat.
Lord Byron most admired, we know,
The Albanian dress, or Suliote ;
But he lived much abroad, and so
He never saw Nick's Long-tail'd Coat.
Or else that noble Poet's theme
Had never been the “ White Capote,”
Had he once view'd, in Fancy's dream,
The glories of Nick's Long-tail'd Coat !

outgrown this unlucky twist in his moral organization, as reason and education came more fully into play, is a point difficult to be decided; since, after the departure of his friend Frederic Stafford he formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened into intimacy, with another of his old

We also know, on Highland kilt
Poor dear Glengarry used to doat,
And had esteem'd it actual guilt
I' the "Gael" to wear a Long-tail'd Coat.

And well it might his eyes annoy ;
Monkbarns himself could never quote
"Sir Robert Sibbald," "Gordon," "Roy,"
Or "Stukely," for a Long-tail'd Coat !

But though the fleet red-deer to chase,
Or guide o'er Highland loch the boat,
A jacket 's well enough — for grace
There 's nothing like Nick's Long-tail'd Coat !

Of course in climbing up a tree
On terra firma, or afloat
To mount the giddy top-mast, he
Would doff awhile his Long-tail'd Coat.

Then whence that supercilious sneer ? —
From out your own eye pull the mote,
Fastidious Critic ! — did *you* ne'er
In youth admire *your* Long-tail'd Coat ?

schoolfellows, a young man, whose turn of mind did much to resuscitate and encourage the half-extinguished errors of his own.

Henry Lambert, the only son of a Sectarian father, was a few years older than Eustace. He had early imbibed the wildest fancies of

Oh, "Nick 's scaree old enough," you mean?—

Why, though too young to have a vote
Or make a will, yet, sure, Fifteen
's a ripe age for a Long-tail'd Coat!

What! — would you have him sport a chin
Like Colonel Sibthorp, or a goat,
Before you think he should begin
To figure in a Long-tail'd Coat?—

Suppose he visits France — can he
Sit down at any *table d'hôte*
With any sort of decency,
Unless he 's got a Long-tail'd Coat?

E'en Louis Philippe, Royal Cit,
There soon may be a *Sans-culotte*,
And surely all must then admit
The advantage of a Long-tail'd Coat.

Things are not now as when, of yore,
In tower encircled by a moat,
Each Lion-hearted Chieftain wore
A corselet — not a Long-tail'd Coat.

the enthusiastic Swedenborg, and became deeply versed in all the half-crazy mysticism of "the Baron's" followers. Dreams, visions, and all the fantastic imagery of his own immaterial world, were, of course, poured by wholesale into the ready ears of his new friend. On a soil

Chain mail his portly form embraced,
 Not, like a weasel or a stoat,
 'Cribb'd and confined' about the waist,
 And pinch'd in as Nick's Long-tail'd Coat.

With beamy spear or biting axe
 To right and left He thrust and smote.
 Ah! what a change!—no sinewy thwaeks
 Fall from a modern Long-tail'd Coat!

To stalwart knights, a puny race
 Succeeds,—with locks *en papillote*,—
 While cuirass, cuisses, greaves, give place
 To silk-net "tights" and Long-tail'd Coat!

Worse changes still! now, well-a-day!
 A few cant phrases learn'd by rote,
 Each beardless booby spouts away,
 A Solon in a Long-tail'd Coat,—

Prates of the "March of Intellect"—
 The "Schoolmaster"—a *Patriote*
 So noble who could e'er suspect
 Had just put on his Long-tail'd Coat?

already so well prepared such seed could not fail of taking root, and bringing forth fruit in rank and precocious abundance. Sympathy became the connecting link between them, and together they plunged into the most recondite *penetralia* of their great apostle, with an ardour increased by being shared.

The better Genius of Fortescue, who had so long slept upon his post, at last seemed to awaken from his nap, but shook not off his slumbers before great, and, to a certain extent, irreparable, mischief had been done to his charge. The friends were separated before the Rosycrucianism — if there be such a word — of one of them, at least, was quite complete. Lambert, whose singular opinions had begun to manifest themselves in certain extravagances of manner

Alack ! alack ! that every thick-
 -skull'd lad must find an antidote
 For England's woes, because, like Nick,
 He has put on a Long-tail'd Coat !—
 —But, lo ! my rhymes begin to fail,
 Nor dare I longer time devote !
 Thus Rhyme and Time cut off the tale,
 —The long tale,—of NICK'S LONG-TAIL'D COAT ! !

and conduct, was closeted one fine morning with his Tutor;—a longer interview succeeded with the Provost of the College on the following day; and on the next, Henry took his last farewell of Cambridge.

Eustace, thus deprived of the associate of his pursuits, once more felt alone in the world; he, too, had undergone the ordeal of an inquiry, naturally suggested by his known intimacy with Lambert; but in him an understanding, originally by no means feeble, had battled strongly with its insidious enemy. Where the fatally perverted intellect of his ally had rioted in full assurance, he had paused in doubt, and even in dismay. — The former gave eager and unhesitating credence to every phantasm of the excited brain, because he panted to know it real — the latter shrank from what he dreaded to find true in all the reluctant wretchedness of half-conviction.

The result of Fortescue's examination was so far favourable, that his superior found little to blame, something to pity, but enough to fix him in the opinion that an entire change of

scene and pursuits was in the highest degree advisable for the health of the young philosophizer, mental as well as corporeal. For the present, however, he contented himself with writing his opinion to the Guardian of his pupil.

Some months elapsed, and at length the very day which acquainted Eustace that his poor friend Lambert had been consigned to the melancholy recesses of a lunatic asylum, brought him also Lord Manningham's consent that he should embrace a military life, should his former inclination to the profession of arms continue unabated.

The loss of the only friend in whom he had been accustomed to confide, the melancholy results which had attended that friend's speculations, and above all the perception that he had himself become an object of scarcely concealed derision to those about him—all induced the youthful visionary eagerly to close with the proposal; all had been prepared in anticipation of his resolve, and a few weeks saw him gazetted to an ensigncy in his Majesty's —th regiment of infantry.

Thus, at the age of nineteen, did Eustace Fortescue enter the world, a handsome strippling, with a fine person, features, of which the melancholy expression did not detract from their manly beauty, while it added, perhaps, to the interest they inspired — a feeling, generous, and honourable heart, and an intellect powerful and unclouded on every subject — save one.

The kindness of his disposition, and his high sense of honour, joined to his conciliating and gentlemanly manners, soon won him golden opinions at the mess; while his aptitude and intelligence secured him the respect of his superior officers, who saw with approbation the extent of his acquirements, nor once dreamed of the unfortunate *monomanie* which lay dormant in his mind, while nothing occurred to draw it forth or expose it to observation.

Unwearied assiduity and a retentive memory soon advanced the military neophyte far in the study, theoretical as well as practical, of his new profession. For many of the high-spirited and ingenuous youths, with whom he was now thrown into contact, he conceived a

regard as sincere as reciprocal ; nor was it without some feelings of regret that he at length received permission to absent himself from his regiment, on being appointed Aide-de-camp to his noble Guardian, now become a General officer, and one whose talents, civil and military, had pointed him out to the Government at home as the man, of all others, peculiarly calculated for a high command in a country where diplomacy was at least as requisite as strategics.

India, the theatre on which the powerful resources of Lord Manningham's mind were now to be displayed, was at this period in a very ticklish state. A formidable combination among the native chiefs had long been more than suspected : the nature and extent of the confederacy was as yet but imperfectly understood ; enough however was known to prove, that the prosperity, and even the very existence, of our settlements in the East were menaced.

A cool head, a quick eye, and a vigorous arm, were imperiously called for ; and Lord Manningham, who had given such ample proofs

of uniting in his own person the various qualities of the statesman and the soldier, had proceeded to the Carnatic.

When Fortescue, too, reached the banks of the Hoogley, he found the family of his benefactor plunged in the deepest affliction. Frederic, his early friend and schoolfellow, the idolized son of parents whom his death had rendered inconsolable, was no more. A fever, contracted by imprudently bathing while his blood was in a high state of fermentation, had carried him off almost before his danger was suspected.

To his father the blow was indeed a severe one: on this darling son he had been accustomed to look with pride as well as with affection, anticipating in his person the friend and support of his own declining years, as well as the successor to his honours, and the protector of his family. He had seen him grow up to man's estate, volatile indeed, but generous, virtuous, and high-minded,—and, justly confident in the rectitude of his principles, and the sterling qualities of his head and heart, the father

contemplated with much less of regret or apprehension the approach of that solemn hour when he should himself be summoned to “go hence, and be no more seen !”

It was fortunate perhaps for Lord Manningham, that the important affairs which at this time forced themselves upon his attention, involving as they did the lives and fortunes of thousands for which he was responsible, compelled him to abstract himself from private griefs, and to devote his undivided energies to the public welfare. Occupation, the best medicine for the wounded heart, is especially so when the welfare of others depends upon it ; and by degrees its good effects became apparent. On the parade or at the council-board but little alteration could be detected by a common observer in the General or the Politician. His cheek, it is true, was somewhat paler, and an added furrow might be seen upon his brow ; but his eye had lost little of its fire, nor, except perhaps when some youthful subaltern, high in health and buoyant in spirit, came suddenly athwart his course, was its lustre

dimmed or his tongue perceived to falter. Duty, to which the Soldier's mind is disciplined, was beyond all question, too, an able auxiliary in producing this effect ; in the private recesses of his own home alone might be detected the wandering glance which, passing from one to other of his remaining children, seemed searching for a face that was not there, till, resting at last upon "the vacant chair," the sad dropping of the eyelid evinced, as it were, a sudden and painful consciousness that the search was vain.

On Lady Manningham the effect of Frederic's death was not less severe, and far more visible ; "her beautiful, her brave," was levelled with the dust, and she bowed indeed beneath the stroke. Time, and the affectionate caresses of her surviving offspring, at length succeeded in restoring in some degree her accustomed tranquillity of manner ; but the irrevocable fiat had gone forth — the blow was struck ; and, though even years elapsed before its full severity was manifested, the seeds of her eventual dissolution but too surely took their root on the premature grave of her boy.

The arrival of Fortescue was at first most painful to both of the bereaved parents. The wound, as yet uncicatrized, bled afresh at the sight of one by whom were called forth so many reminiscences connected with him who *had been*; yet such, and so inexplicable is the human heart, these very sensations soon acquired a new character, in the words of the son of Fingal, “mournful, yet pleasing to the soul.” The well-known affection borne by their lamented Frederic to his friend cemented still more strongly those ties which bound him to the bereaved; while the younger branches of the family, with hearts though truly sorrowing, yet naturally less deeply impressed than those of their parents, received him at once with unalloyed pleasure, and soon learned to consider him as a substitute for the brother they had lost.

For much of this Fortescue was unquestionably indebted to his own kind, conciliating, and affectionate disposition, — for some of it, perhaps, to the evident attachment which displayed itself in a thousand forms between him and his early companion and avowed favourite,

Matilda, now a fine full-grown girl, rich in health, beauty, and accomplishments. Lord Manningham did not long remain blind to an attachment which was so unequivocally displayed on both sides, nor did he regard it with a disapproving eye.

Of the head and heart of Fortescue, as I have before said, he entertained the highest opinion ; and although the accounts from College, which originally induced him to favour his entrance into the army, had represented his young friend as likely to become a sufferer from an over-heated imagination, yet the very same report spoke in the most gratifying terms of the correctness of his moral conduct, the respectability of his talents, and the amiableness of his disposition.

In his subsequent commerce with that epitome of the world which is found in a marching regiment, his general deportment had, as we have seen, been ever regulated according to the nicest rules of the Gentleman and the Soldier ; and if he had not, as yet, distinguished himself in the field, or in the more active duties

of the profession he had adopted, it was manifest from his sentiments and gallant bearing that this was only owing to his not having as yet been called into his proper sphere of action, nor would any one who knew him have hesitated to assert that time and opportunity alone "were wanting to his fame."

This opportunity was not long deferred: a partial irruption of the disaffected tribes took place, prematurely indeed for their success; but certain precautionary movements on the part of the Government had apprised them that their intentions were more than suspected, and, wily as they were, an immediate outbreak seemed now preferable to the more doubtful advantages, which under other circumstances might have been obtained by a longer delay.

In the course of the desultory but sanguinary struggle which ensued, Fortescue did not belie the opinion formed of him by his fellow-soldiers; active, vigilant, patient, and intrepid, he displayed in this his first campaign an almost intuitive knowledge of tactics — a coolness and an energy which ranked him with

the veteran ; nor, in the fierce and final conflict which eventually broke the power of the enemy, and forced him to sue for peace from the depths of his native jungles, were his valour and conduct less conspicuous.

A wound, inflicted on his sword-arm by the sabre of a Subahdar, who fell in the act, was just of sufficient consequence to call forth all the cares and attentions, without exciting the alarms, of those who loved him. Need it be said, that those of Matilda were the foremost — that her hand was ever ready to adjust the bandage, her arm the one most eagerly tendered and accepted as a support ?

It was during the temporary secession from his duties, occasioned by this accident, that the hearts, the sentiments, the very thoughts of the lovers became more thoroughly unveiled to each other. Reminiscences of “auld langsyne,” the occurrences of the days that were gone, formed, as may well be imagined, no unfrequent topics of discourse between two sensitive beings, once so closely connected, then so long separated, and now again so happily united — the

freaks, the studies, the pastimes of their early years were a never-failing theme, on which to expatiate — nor was Edith, with her legendary treasures, forgotten. — The frequent allusions to her fanciful creed made by Matilda, on whose young and somewhat romantic mind her marvellous tales had produced a deeper impression than she was herself aware of, once more aroused in the bosom of her auditor thoughts and feelings which, although the busy life he had of late led had rendered them dormant, were anything but extinguished.

The visionary and the enthusiast becomes not less so under the influence of love ; the nature of his reveries may be changed by passion — they may vacillate between gloom and ecstasy ; but their power over the imagination is even increased, and, if partaken by the object of his affection, may be urged by sympathy to the very height of excitement.

By degrees Matilda became the *confidante* of all the day-dreams which had floated through the mind of Eustace.

To one of her tender and affectionate turn

there was a something so congenial and endearing in the theory of a communion of Spirits, freed from the grosser and embarrassing clog of matter—in the idea that, although bodies might be divided, nought could interfere to prevent the union of souls—that it is scarcely to be wondered at if, listening with eagerness to the object of her young affections, she soon learned to imbibe the most extravagant of his notions, and to believe, because she wished, them real.

Screened from the intolerable heat of a vertical sun by the intercepting verandah, or courting the coolness of the evening breeze beneath their favourite tree, minutes, nay, hours would fly by unheeded, and leave the pair, as they found them, occupied like our first parents, so beautifully described by the poet, in the discussion of mysteries too recondite and abstruse for human intellect to penetrate.

“ He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was filled
With admiration and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange !”

The attachment of the disembodied Spirit

after death to those it loved, ere it “had shuffled off its mortal coil,”—its presence, and capabilities of watching over their welfare, and holding a communion with them at once intimate and mysterious, was a favourite contemplation of Fortescue, and one of his most cherished ideas. — He exulted in a persuasion, which seemed to place his love beyond the reach of accident, and to render it indissoluble, even by death itself.

It were difficult, perhaps impossible, accurately to trace this feeling to its source, or follow it, through every connecting link of the chain, to its termination in full conviction. Those cooler heads who have threaded the labyrinths of the absurd and incongruous, yet sometimes sublime speculations of the philosophical visionary whose lucubrations had bewildered him — they, and they alone, will easily conceive how powerful the spell must be upon a kindred mind on which they have once succeeded in making an impression.

It is an inseparable property of Fanaticism to be ever in extremes, and Love, even when it

has to do with stronger minds than that of the gentle and confiding Matilda Stafford, is but too ready to see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, of the one object which is everything to it, and to which it is everything. — Perhaps, too, some sad presentiment, — as the glance of her lover would fondly rest upon the elegant but fragile form before him, — might half induce a nameless dread lest that form might be *too* fragile — too nearly allied to another world to promise a long continuance in this ; while, on the other side, the recollection of her brother — so lately rejoicing in youth, and health, and spirits, — now flourishing in all the lusty prime of manhood, and then at once stricken to the earth — a withered, blighted thing ! — might have its full share in fostering the predispositions of Matilda, and in causing her to cling more tenaciously to a belief, pregnant, as she would imagine, with security — to views, the realization of which would prove a safeguard against separation, and assuage, if not absolutely vanquish, the terrors and regrets attendant upon that hour when all that gives motion

to the active, or elevation to the eminent — all that sparkles in the eye of earthly hope, or pants in the bosom of earthly affection, at once becomes dust in the balance, without weight and without regard.

Meanwhile, their union, contemplated as it was with approbation by both the parents of Miss Stafford, met with repeated checks and obstructions, not more annoying in themselves to the lovers by the delay which they occasioned to their happiness, than lamentable from the circumstances which produced them. These were the events already alluded to in the earlier part of these memoirs.

For several years might Lord Manningham's house indeed be called "The House of Mourning." — The pernicious effects of the climate upon European constitutions became but too sadly manifested. One by one his children sickened, faded, and were no more. No less than five of them were borne in succession to the tomb, and that at intervals so brief, that hardly had one been deposited in the "place appointed unto all living," ere another exhibited

tokens, but too fatally verified by the event, that its doors would soon again be opened to receive a kindred victim.

It is not to be concluded that, during the whole of this season of affliction, Fortescue was constantly present at head-quarters ; his military duties, on the contrary, and the confidence reposed in him by his chief, had repeatedly occasioned a temporary absence, and drawn him, on various occasions, up the country.

These absences, however, if they could not increase, certainly had no tendency to weaken his affection or his sympathy. A correspondence of the most tender kind was kept up, when practicable, between him and his fair mistress ; and when distance or other circumstances were unfavourable to the transmission of those gentle missives which

“ Waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole,”

the Lover’s old alternative and confidante, the Moon, interposed her good offices as no inefficient substitute. To gaze, at an appointed hour, upon her disk — to cherish the thought that the beloved one, though afar, was at the

same instant engaged in a similar contemplation — was the resource, and speeded that soft intercourse of Spirit they flattered, and had almost succeeded in persuading themselves that they had established, despite the obstacles interposed by corporeal trammels.

During one of these expeditions Eustace had been taken seriously ill; his youth, however, and a good constitution, had triumphed after a short but severe struggle, and released him, for the present at least, from the performance of his share of a voluntary and mutual obligation, entered into at this period of their attachment, which pledged the one first departing to the “land of souls” to manifest him or herself visibly to the survivor, if so it might be, and thus to evidence that Death itself had failed to rend the ties which bound them to each other.

His return, weak and enfeebled as he was, to the Government House, was, I need scarcely say, an event hailed with joy by all parties; but especially by Matilda, to whom he failed not to impart all that he had suffered both in

mind and body, as well as the consolation that had been afforded him in moments which he had then believed to be his last, by the thought that, though expiring far from her and all he loved, his enfranchised Spirit might yet be permitted to return, to hover over, and to prove her Guardian and protecting Angel.

The tears of Matilda, as she hung in fondness on his arm, flowed freely ; the rather, perhaps, as she anticipated but too truly another separation at no distant period.

Hordes of those restless and predatory tribes, whom the courage and conduct of the Lord Governor had once before so effectually repressed, were again in arms. The most formidable accounts of their numbers and of the ravages they were committing arrived daily at the Residence. All attempts at negotiation (and such indeed were resorted to, rather than the appeal to arms might be plainly the result of necessity, not choice, on the part of the British Government,) entirely failed, and the veteran Manningham once again prepared to take the field.

Fortescue, by this time appointed to a Majority, was of course destined to take a prominent part in the expedition : his mind, perhaps yet acted upon by the memory of his recent escape, was filled with gloomy forebodings ; something of this he could not succeed in concealing during his parting interview with Matilda, which was in consequence a more than usually tender one, and a solemn renewal of the contract already mentioned was made at his express and earnest entreaty. The fond girl caught the infection of alarm from him, and heavily indeed did anxiety preponderate over hope in her bosom, when the hour of separation at length arrived, and she saw her Eustace riding at the head of his column, and bound for the almost impervious forests and terrific *Ghauts* of Nipal.

It is by no means my intention to follow him through his campaign, nor to relate “ the moving accidents by flood and field ” which he was destined to encounter and surmount. — The events of the Pindarree war belong to History. — It is sufficient for my purpose to state, that, on

its successful termination, Eustace, as if to belie his presentiment, returned, with unimpaired health and an increased reputation, to lay his newly gathered laurels at the feet of his beloved. He found her as beautiful, as fond as ever; nor did his entreaties, that now at length his long and tried attachment might meet its dearest reward, experience any farther repulse, either on her part or on that of her parents.

Lord Manningham indeed, in whose favour Fortescue had, if possible, continued to rise, did not affect to conceal his pleasure in consenting to the immediate union of the lovers; and the nuptial day was fixed. The very evening before the morn that was to crown his fondest hopes had arrived; and Fortescue, after several hours passed in the society of her who was so soon to be indissolubly united to him, had returned, for the last time, to his quarters, it having been arranged that, for the present at least, the young couple should take up their residence in the Government House.

The expectant bridegroom had retired for the

night, and was in the act of throwing himself upon his couch, to obtain—if anticipated happiness would allow it him—a short repose, when, as he ever after averred,—a single shriek—shrill and piercing as horror and agony could utter—rang in his ear.

He sprang in disorder from the bed; — he could not be mistaken—the tones of that voice were too firmly fixed in his memory not to be recognised, even though strained to an unnatural pitch by pain or affright.—It was Matilda's cry he heard; and, as the conviction struck upon his heart, the sound of his own name, uttered as with difficulty, seemed, to his startled fancy, to float upon the night breeze.

It was an appeal for succour, — for protection; and with a bosom throbbing with anxious and undefined apprehension of he knew not what, a few seconds saw him retracing his steps to the Residence, with all the speed which the utmost energies of his agile frame could command.

Swift is the pace of him who thinks the beloved of his heart in danger, and few were

the minutes which sufficed to transport Fortescue again to the habitation which enshrined her; yet, ere he reached the portal, a sound of hurry and confusion from the house, and lights seen rapidly traversing the interior, increased his forebodings to almost the certainty of misfortune. Nor were his anticipations deceived.

Forcing his way through the alarmed domestics, in whose countenances grief and consternation were too plainly visible, Eustace rushed towards the apartments of Matilda. They were already occupied by a group, the expression of whose countenances would have defied the efforts of the painter.

On one side lay Lady Manningham, pale and senseless, in the arms of two of her female attendants;—at the foot of the bed stood her husband, apparently unconscious of her situation, and with every faculty absorbed in contemplating his darling daughter, on whose pallid features death had already set his seal. The household physician, and another medical officer attached to the forces, were vainly employed

in endeavouring to restore animation to the pale frame before them, while their countenances sufficiently demonstrated the hopelessness of the attempt.

Not far from the couch of death, and gazed at with undisguised horror by the attendants, as they hurried to and fro, lay an object, which too fatally explained the scene. One of the most venomous of the serpent tribe that curse the arid shores of Indostan—one whose poison is scarcely more deadly than instantaneous in its effects.

A single glance at the crushed reptile, and the sight of his unfortunate mistress, revealed the whole maddening truth to the miserable Fortescue.

He threw himself in unrestrained agony by the side of her whom he had so lately left high in hope and glowing with affection,—of her whose parting spirit had, as he verily believed, called on him for aid in those more than mortal accents, which yet vibrated on his ear.

The shock was, under all the circumstances, too severe for human endurance; and, after a burst of irrepressible agony, he was borne from the apartment, insensible alike to the misery of those around him, and to his own.

CHAPTER VI.

Come, let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes' bells shall ring ;
Love strikes the fiddle-string,
And Venus plays the lute !
Hymen gay
Struts away,
Happy at the wedding-day ;
Cocks his chin,
And figures in,
To tabor, fife, and flute !

COLMAN.

MORE OF "DEATH'S DOINGS."—FOR ENGLAND HO ! — BILLS
—ORDERED TO LIE ON THE TABLE.—A RACE.—A CHASE.
A "LARK."—A TORY OUTRAGE, AND A LIBERAL ACCOUNT
OF IT.—WEDDING FESTIVITIES.—WHERE'S THE PARSON ?

It were needless to dwell on the melancholy blank in Fortescue's existence which succeeded the annihilation of his fondest hopes, nor shall I detain my readers by expatiating on the

feelings of Lord and Lady Manningham on so overwhelming a calamity. It is my Cousin Nicholas, whose "whereabouts" I have charged myself with the task of recording, nor dare I suffer any minor consideration to interfere longer with the concerns of that interesting individual. Indeed, but that the impression produced on Fortescue by the incidents already related eventually exercised a material influence on his fortunes as well as on my own, I should scarcely have ventured on so formidable a digression from the highway of my history.

It will only be necessary, therefore, to state, that the bereaved mother never recovered the shock inflicted on her. Her enfeebled frame sank wholly beneath the repetition of blows which had long since prostrated its best energies; and, after a few short months of hopeless lingering, she followed her beloved children gently and unrepiningly to the tomb; bequeathing the young Amelia to the concentrated affection of him who was now her only parent.

In this affection towards the blooming girl

Fortescue soon became a sharer; and often, as he turned from gazing on her animated features, his upraised eye and quivering lip would seem to intimate, that he was even then holding high and mysterious converse with some unseen being, of which the fairy form beside him was the subject.

Certain it is, that from this period the fondness of Lord Manningham himself for this "sole daughter of his house and heart" could hardly be said to exceed his own; nor could a father watch more tenderly over the welfare of the most beloved child. Every word and action announced that Fortescue considered himself bound by some sacred obligation to be her guardian and protector against every mischance; and as she advanced towards womanhood, this self-imposed task was only the more strongly manifested. From the broken expressions and half-uttered sentences which occasionally escaped him, a doubt would, it is true, sometimes arise in the minds of those who witnessed them, whether the task were indeed self-imposed; and more than one of the female part of the esta-

blishment, especially, had listened awestruck to the insinuations of the wonder-loving valet, Mr. Pipeclay, as he more than hinted, that, at the dead hour of night, he had often heard "his master the Major argufying with a ghost about Miss."

That he entertained towards her the warmest affection none could doubt; as little could the nature of that affection be questioned. Love, at least the passion usually known by that name, in him was manifestly dead. No — his was the fervent but pure and hallowed attachment of an elder brother. Her father saw and hailed its progress with the greatest satisfaction, without being for one moment blind to its quality or origin; and, when affairs of importance connected with his official duties induced him to cause Eustace to precede him to Europe, nothing gave him greater satisfaction than the conviction which their parting hour afforded, that, happen what might to himself, his daughter would still possess an affectionate and disinterested protector.

On Lord Manningham's return to England

with Amelia, Fortescue was in the north, having been induced to accompany a brother officer into Cumberland; nor did the friends again encounter each other till the moment when Eustace had the happiness of placing in his noble patron's arms the daughter whom he had so opportunely rescued from the particularly impudent abduction of my Cousin Nicholas.

I have said, that of this "tenth transmitter" of the Bullwinkle physiognomy no recent accounts had been received. That he was yet in *rerum naturâ*, however, was to be inferred from certain interesting *memoranda*, which occasionally reached Sir Oliver in the shape of sundry paper parallelograms, adorned with goodly columns of arithmetical ciphers, and surmounted by "the Roman initials of pounds, shillings, and pence."

To all these applications, and they came "thick as leaves in Valambrosa," did Sir Oliver put in a demurrer. "Nick had a handsome allowance, and if he exceeded it, he might take the consequences."

Many of the items, too, excited the good Baronet's surprise no less than his indignation. Of the effeminacy of the race of dandies he had heard something; but that they should have arrived at the Sybaritism of wearing "satin shoes," and "pearl ear-rings," astounded, while it disgusted him; yet many of the invoices of goods sold and delivered, which had been sent in on account of "N. Bullwinkle, Esq." comprised articles of a similar description; while long bills for "lace" seemed to intimate that, in the revolutions of fashion, the Mechlin cravats and ruffles of the first Georges were again become the prevailing mode.

"A Chinchilli muff, with boa to match," was absolutely abominable. Sir Oliver had, indeed, seen something like the latter encompassing the throat of a guardsman off duty, during his late sojourn in the metropolis;—some of the household troops, too, had, as he remembered, borne an article not unlike the former on their heads at the last review; but, then, "Nick was not in the Blues, and why the d—l should he want to stick his head in a muff?"—He could have

no pretensions to a uniform, while every notion of propriety was outraged by the supposition, that any man would introduce such an innovation into his ordinary costume.

But it mattered little ;—"if Nick chose to make a jackass and a monkey of himself he might," but not one penny would he, Sir Oliver, contribute towards such a degradation of the natural dignity of man. A large proportion of the bills were, in consequence, returned, with an intimation to the above effect, anything but agreeable to his numerous correspondents.

As Sir Oliver made no secret of these protocols, or of the extent of Mr. Bullwinkle's pecuniary engagements, some of which were of considerable standing, a new light broke in upon me. That a gentleman, whose *menus plaisirs* required such ample supplies, should find four hundred a-year, paid quarterly, insufficient for his occasions, was to be expected ; and although experience had taught me that he would readily borrow of any friend who would lend to him, yet such resources were clearly too limited, and too precarious, to form a very material item

in his budget for the current year. The mystery of Mr. Arbuthnot, then, and his Hebrew correspondent, seemed to receive a ready solution. Again did I task my memory to recall everything that had passed on that very unsatisfactory morning, when our united researches after my fair *incognita* had terminated in nothing but fatigue and disappointment. That Nicholas must have seized some opportunity, on that very day, to purloin my letter, I had before felt satisfied ; and now entertained little doubt that he had availed himself of the moment when I was discharging our bill at the coffee-house, to put in practice one of those clever pieces of *legerdemain* on which he piqued himself.

That the Jew money-lender's letter was then substituted by him for my mother's I became convinced, as well as that the needy gentleman, on whose attempt to raise cash by "de Post obit" it put so decided a negative, was either Nicholas himself, or some accommodating associate of his in the noble art and mystery of "kite-flying."

In the absence of all positive information on the subject of his present place of sojourn — for the address at Frump Paddock I looked upon as clearly apocryphal — one circumstance still induced me to believe that he was, in fact, at no great distance from the alleged locality of that retreat of all the domestic virtues.

A morning paper of high Tory principles, had copied from the *Sussex Conservative*, a formidable paragraph, to which, by way of “gracing its tale with decent horror,” it had prefixed the words, “Atrocious outrage, and horrible violation of the sanctuaries of the dead.”

The account which followed was dated from Brighton, and stated, in substance, that, in the dusk of the preceding evening, a truculent-looking ruffian had been detected in the very act of carrying on his disgusting trade of a resurrectionist, in the very churchyard of that marine metropolis:—that being hotly pursued, he had excited the greatest alarm and consternation among the elegant promenaders of the Steyne, by running the whole length of

that fashionable lounge, with the dead body of a child under his arm, the bare sight of whose projecting legs had, *inter alia maxime deflenda*, frightened the Honourable Mrs. Faddle into fits, and would, it was to be feared, from her "interesting situation," effect a change in the succession to the earldom of Fiddlefunkin. It was gratifying, however, "to be able to assure their readers" that "the monster" was eventually secured by the "intrepidity of Mrs. Martha Gun," and conveyed, with the *corpus delicti* upon him, to the nearest justice of the peace. On his examination before the Magistrate, he was fully identified as a distinguished Radical Reformer, and a leading member of Lodge No. 275 of the Grand National Consolidated Trades' Union.

The "article" concluded with an animated apostrophe on the increasing depravity and licentiousness of the lower orders.

A "Liberal" Journal, of the same date, gave a different version of the same story, extracted from the "*Brighthelmstone Independ-*

ent,” and headed in what are technically called “small caps”—THE TORIES AGAIN!!—INFAMOUS ATTACK ON THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC!!!—

One of “those hereditary nuisances,” who so arrogantly “tyrannize over the people,” had, according to this *liberal* statement, committed a daring and felonious robbery upon an eminent dealer in all kinds of spirituous liquors.

This “*Gentleman*, for so he called himself, and boasted that he belonged to a Noble (!!) family,” in his sheer, wanton, “aristocratical love of oppressing the useful classes,” had snatched up, and run away with, a bran new Jolly Bacchus, just come home from the painter’s, and about to be placed astride upon a barrel over the door of Mr. Juniper’s *emporium*.

The “world was challenged” to “ransack the annals” of Nero and Nadir Schah for a parallel to the “heartless and insolent barbarity” of thus wresting from an “honest operative” the emblem of his calling, and “opposing the march of intellect,” by depriving “the people” of “a guide to useful knowledge,” which taught them where to apply for consola-

tion "under the miseries inflicted on them by peers and parsons."

"Dukes and princes, as they styled themselves," were, it was added, *always* committing "outrages on the people," by their "larks;" and "it was notorious," that, when the "h—l-born minister, Pitt," was in office, a lantern had been tied to an old woman's tail in Pall Mall by the hands of royalty itself;—but "the people" would "no longer be trampled upon," "the time was come," &c. &c. &c.

It was "much to be lamented" that "several operatives," occupied at the moment in partaking of certain choice compounds, had suffered severely from the breaking of a large case bottle of oil-of-vitriol, which *happened* to be in the shop, and was overturned in the first rush after the fugitive, who, bolting, across the Steyne, with his prize under his arm, would doubtless have escaped with it altogether, had he not by the greatest good fortune, run against a lady who was crying mackerel, knocked her down, and rolled over her into the channel.

The examination, it was added, was strictly

private, and the delinquent had "received permission to speak to the prosecutor;" but the editor "had authority to state," that all attempts at compromise *would have been* indignantly rejected by the truly patriotic Mr. Juniper, but that he was induced to relinquish farther proceedings by the reflection that, as the painter's bill had not been paid, he could not conscientiously swear the image of the son of Semele to be his own property; the culprit, therefore, was of course "discharged with an admonition."—

"We should ill perform our duty to the public, (said the Brighthelmstone Independent,) were we to refrain from publishing the name of the delinquent; and this we should undoubtedly do, had it not unluckily escaped our reporter's memory; we have reason, however, to believe, that he was identified as the heir to a baronetcy."

The whole was wound up *en règle* by an elaborate *eulogium* on the virtues of "producers," and an *exposé* of the practical inconvenience of having such things as a House of Peers and a Bench of Bishops, without whose corrupt influ-

ence none of these “larks” would be entered into.

That Nicholas was the hero of this absurd adventure I considered very far from improbable.

From boyhood he had been a great collector of emblematic rarities ;—wooden hats, golden boots, the lion gules of the publican, and the azure globe of the pawnbroker,—the solitary barber’s pole that graced the village of Underdown, and every commercial device that the neighbouring town could supply, had early constituted the most cherished ornaments of his private apartment.

In this his *museum*, the Highlander of the tobaccoist extended his mull courteously towards the Black Doll of the dealer in marine stores, and the gigantic Spectacles of the optician seemed to gaze undismayed at the gold-beater’s uplifted Mallet.—Knockers, Serapers, Shutter-pens, and Pump-handles, lay scattered around in elegant and unstudied variety.

Nor were the finer arts neglected ; a portrait of Admiral Lord Rodney, done in oil, and in

excellent preservation, needed not its subjoined legend of "Good entertainment for man and horse," to prove that Nicholas's taste in painting had withdrawn it from a more elevated situation ; while a Galen's head,—umquhile the property of "Pig-tail Drench," and gorgeous as gold leaf could make it,—evinced that he was equally alive to the charms of sculpture.

That to these treasures of the moderns he should wish to add some specimens of a more ancient school was to be expected from one of my Cousin's classical mind. The convivial Deity of heathen mythology would harmonize admirably with a magnificent Bunch of golden grapes which already depended temptingly from his ceiling, and of all "the gods of the Greeks" *Lyæus* was the one for whom he professed and felt the greatest veneration. Hence, as I was persuaded, the attack upon the unpaid-for property of the conscientious Joseph Juniper ; and I looked forward with confidence to the time when, "flushed with a purple grace," the jolly God would yet "show his honest face" in one of the back attics of Underdown Hall.

Meanwhile my own affairs went on smoothly and happily as heart could wish. My health was now perfectly re-established, and no obstacle existed to the completion of my wishes save what might arise from the "law's delay" in the due preparation of settlements, with all those provisoes respecting pinmoney and alimony, which, in what is termed high life, usually accompany matrimony, and which, in the joining two persons together for life, contemplate the extreme probability of their separating for ever.

Lord Manningham affected no unnecessary secrecy on this occasion, nor was Uncle Oliver the man to hide his candle under a bushel;—various paragraphs, therefore, soon found their way into different journals from the tradespeople employed on the wedding *paraphernalia*.—The *trousseau* of the bride, the equipage of the bridegroom, "the names of the horses and colours of the riders," were duly announced with all the pomp and circumstance usual on these occasions, and with a minuteness of detail as laudably accurate as that which had hereto-

fore blazoned forth the Ollapod livery “tastefully turned up with a rhubarb-coloured lapelle.”

At length, after a proper proportion of these pilot-balloons had sufficiently informed the expectant public which way the wind was blowing, the Morning Post put forth the following clincher.

“H. M. S. the Superb, 74, Hon. Captain Loblolly, has been ordered round to * * *, where she will take on board the Right Reverend the new Bishop of Bengal. His Lordship was consecrated on Sunday the 4th instant, in the chapel appertaining to the Archbishopal Palace at Lambeth, and is about to embark forthwith, with his amiable family, for the important diocese over which he has been called upon to preside.

“On his way to the coast, his Lordship will visit Underdown Hall, the seat of Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, Bart. for the express purpose of solemnizing the marriage ceremony between Charles Stafford, Esq. nephew to the hospitable proprietor of the mansion, and his cousin, the

Hon. Amelia Stafford, the beautiful and accomplished heiress of Lord Viscount Manningsham, K. B., late Governor General, &c. &c. &c.

“Immediately after the ceremony, the Right Rev. Prelate will proceed to the place of embarkation, while the happy couple will set out for Belvoir Abbey, on the banks of the Wye, the splendid domain recently purchased by the noble Nabob, from the heirs of the late Lord Cumberville.”

Three days subsequently, a Sunday Paper, piquing itself, and justly, on the priority of its intelligence, and the accuracy of its details, had a paragraph differing slightly from the former.

“The new Bishop of Bengal is, we are credibly informed, about to proceed to his diocese in the West Indies, where his Lordship has long been most anxiously expected, though we have good reason to believe that few persons till lately have been aware of his appointment.

“His Lordship will embark in the Skeleton hired transport, Captain Coffin, commander ;—and here we cannot help calling the attention of the

public to the disgraceful parsimony of Ministers in not placing a Government vessel at the Right Reverend Prelate's disposal ; — though, as profuse expenditure can never be justified, they are quite right after all in refusing to add to the burthens of the country for the convenience of a bloated hierarchy—unless indeed there should be good reason for the contrary,—which we are inclined to think may possibly be the case.

“His Lordship has been for some time on a visit at Bullwinkle Place, the residence of Oliver Underdown, Esq. whose elegant and accomplished daughter is about to bestow her hand and immense fortune, including the fine estate of Thingumbob Hall,—bequeathed to her by her uncle the late Lord Thingumdiddle,—upon Viscount Manningham. Gunter has exhausted all his taste in the composition of the bridecake, which the Bishop probably took down with him in his carriage ;— unless, indeed,— as we have been assured is the case,—his Lordship on this occasion travelled down on horseback followed by a single groom.”

The former announcement of the two, if less

particular, was in substance the most correct. The Bishop was an old and valued friend of Lord Manningham, whose interest indeed had mainly contributed to his appointment ; and, as the state of my mother's health presented an impediment to her sanctioning our union with her presence in the metropolis, it had been determined that the ceremony should take place in the parish church of Underdown, the good prelate consenting, not without some personal inconvenience to himself, to deviate a few miles from his direct route to the coast, for the satisfaction of bestowing the nuptial benediction upon his patron's daughter.

The 10th of the month was the anniversary of my mother's birth, and this day, which had been fixed upon, at her request, to unite Amelia and myself, despite Time's ambling progress, at length arrived.

The sun rose fair and brilliant ; and if all nature did not absolutely "wear one universal grin" on the occasion, neither had we to accuse her of being a niggard of her smiles.

Sir Oliver was early in the field, ordering,

superintending, and confusing everything and everybody.—Miss Pyefinch was not idle; a handsome *déjeuner à la fourchette* was spread under her delegated auspices, and loaded the long table in the Cedar parlour, flanking which, stood her brother in full uniform;—a suit of regimentals that had long since fallen into desuetude, and which, from their cut, might have belonged to my Lord Ligonier, having been drawn forth from the very inmost recesses of the gallant officer's wardrobe for the purpose of doing honour to the day.

Four fine blood-horses, with a white favour at each ear, were champing their bits in the stable, impatient of delay, and eager for the moment when they should have the honour of whirling the bride and bridegroom over hill and dale;—the “handsome travelling barouche,” so glowingly described in Messrs. Honeyman's advertising paragraphs for the last fortnight, stood ready loaded, with imperial fixed, and all the baggage, save the lady's maid and her bandboxes, properly adjusted. “The church was decked at morning tide;” the sconces were well

supplied with miniature *bouquets*, and the pews with expectant rustics, all curious to witness the “grand wedding.” Within the belfry sat eight or ten “college youths,” whose “united ages” amounted to Heaven knows how many centuries, all eager to ring out Heaven knows how many “triple-bob-majors;” while in front of the old ivied porch were ranged in two goodly rows, a pleasing sample of the village Ophelias, each with her basket of moral-bearing flowerets, blushing, giggling, and wondering “what could possibly make the gentle-folks so late;”—everybody in short was in a bustle, for everything had long been ready, but—an awful *but* on such an emergency—the clergyman!

It is recorded of an eminent practitioner of the art of abstraction, that when on his way to that fatal tree, where, as Mat Prior tells us,

“The Squire of the Pad and the Knight of the Post,
Find their pains no more baulk’d, and their aims no
more cross’d.”

he addressed the crowd, which was running up Holborn Hill beside him, with all that *politesse*

which distinguished the golden age of thievery, an age when the coarse expression that so disgusted Juan,

“D—n your eyes, your money or your life !”

never disgraced the lips of a highwayman of any mark or likelihood ; and when the Macleans and Duvals, whose loss posterity has so much reason to lament, would rather have left a man’s brains unscattered, than have blown them out in a rude and indelicate manner — “Gentlemen,” said the professor alluded to, “pray do not hurry,—you will heat yourselves, and that most unnecessarily ;—on my honour, *there will be no fun till I come !*” — Alack, that the good Bishop of Bengal did not despatch some monitory messenger fraught with a similar hint ! What hurryings and scamperings, what wonderings, and toilings, and turmoilings, would not such a trifling attention on his part have prevented ! — So at least though Sir Oliver.

As the special licence with which I was duly armed, did away with the necessity of attending to hours strictly canonical, one o’clock had been

the time fixed upon for the ceremony, our Right Reverend friend having promised to be with us before noon. But

“ The bell of the castle toll’d One,”

and the wheels of his chariot still tarried ;— the groom stationed, by way of outpost, at the head of the avenue, to telegraph his lordship’s appearance in the offing, still gazed and “ made no sign ;”—jellies and cold chicken stood untasted ;— Sir Oliver began to look fidgety, and the Captain voracious ; the eyes of the former oscillating between his watch and the window, those of the latter between a pyramid of prawns and a lobster salad.

The great clock that had for years enlivened the Hall with its tickings, now distinctly sounded Two !—The vibration served to unlock the lips of Miss Pyefinch, who, breaking the taciturnity which seemed to have hermetically sealed those of all the rest of the party assembled, gave vent in a whisper to a remark which, though neither very profound nor very original, was unquestionably both true and appropriate ; — she said, “ It was very odd ! ”

Sir Oliver gasped, and the Captain helped himself to a glass of Madeira, but neither replied ; their looks, however, were so encouraging, that the lady ventured to follow up her observation with a hope that “ nothing was the matter ! ”

The charm was now dissolved ; every tongue recovered its functions, and it was unanimously resolved, in contradiction to her so kindly expressed wish, that “ something *was* — that something *must be* the matter,” and away dashed the Baronet, watch in hand, on a solitary visit to his sentinel, who still remained in warder guise, looking “ as far as he could see.”

The muttered ejaculation that escaped my Uncle as he sallied forth, satisfied me that the wish then uppermost in his mind was connected with the speedy translation of our Right Reverend friend to a diocese, even more sultry and extensive than the one just subjected to his pastoral superintendence. — I doubt whether at the moment I should myself have interposed a *veto* to the *congé d'elire*.

Our wedding party seemed now much in the same situation with that which the bard records to have been so unseasonably marred by a certain "Jock of Hazeldean," save that, fortunately for myself, the only personage missing was the bishop, and not the bride, who still remained closeted above stairs with my mother, and, of course, in a state of suspense rendered anything but enviable by this flagrant instance of episcopal remissness.

Lord Manningham himself had now become uneasy, and as another hour was by this time fast drawing to a close without any sign of the prelate's appearance, a serious inquiry ensued as to "What was to be done?"

The Viscount, expressing his fears that his Right Reverend friend had met with some accident, hinted at the necessity of a postponement of the ceremony. Against this measure, however, I entered my most vehement protest, suggesting, by way of *contre-projet*, that, as the parson of the parish could tie the nuptial knot quite as firmly, if not quite so handsomely, as his ec-

clesiastical superior, the services of our old acquaintance the Reverend Mr. Bustle should be put in requisition.

That learned and much esteemed gentleman was, of course, in attendance as an invited guest, and now readily proffered his assistance towards rescuing us from our dilemma, the prospect of officiating, indeed, seeming almost to console him for missing an introduction to so dignified a pillar of the Church.

The discussion waxed warm, and Miss Pyefinch was preparing to issue forth and summon Sir Oliver to "the talk," when a glance from the window showed us that personage returning to the house, and in company with a domestic in a sad-coloured livery, who led by the bridle-rein a hot and jaded steed, from which he seemed but just to have dismounted.

"News at last from the Bishop!" quoth Lord Manningham. — The Captain nodded. "Of course, then, we must not now expect him in person!" — The Captain shook his head, and helped himself to another bumper of Madeira.

When Sir Oliver entered the room, he bore an epistle in each hand ; the one was open, the seal of the other had not been broken. I saw at a glance that my good Uncle was in one of his old fits of mystified excitement.

“ Why, what is the meaning of all this, Lord Manningham ? Is your confounded Bishop drunk or mad ? ”

“ Neither, I will venture to affirm,” responded Lord Manningham gravely.

“ Then, who the devil’s Pumppe ? ” asked the Baronet.

“ I know no such person,” replied the Viscount.

“ Why, zounds ! he’s your very particular friend,” shrieked Sir Oliver.

“ I never heard the name before,” said his Lordship.

“ Then read your own letter, my Lord, and see if it will throw any light upon the cursed rigmarole stuff I have got here ; — as I am a living soul, I can’t make head or tail of a single word of it.”

The exhausted Baronet threw himself into

a chair, puffing like a stranded grampus, while the peer quietly received from his extended hand the proffered billet, which he unsealed, and retreated to the window to peruse ; meanwhile, I gently drew its fellow from my uncle's grasp, and, sanctioned by his mute permission, read it thus :—

“ SIR OLIVER,

“ Though personally unacquainted with you, I beg to express to every member of your family my sincere sympathy on an event so distressing to their feelings. Strong as his mind is, I tremble to think on the effect which the shock must have produced on poor Lord Manningham, though the fears of his friend, Sir Willoughby Pumppe, have, I trust, exaggerated an evil in itself sufficiently formidable.

“ I would fain hope that the object of the infatuated girl's choice is not so utterly depraved as he has been led to believe. When his Lordship returns, pray take a proper opportunity to present the inclosed. You will agree with me, that, under the circumstances, my

presence at Underdown Hall would be not only useless, but distressing to all concerned ; I proceed, therefore, at once to the vessel in waiting for me.

“ As the wind is now fair, I dare scarcely hope for any farther intelligence before we sail, but I shall expect it with anxiety by the very first means of communication.

“ To the kind attentions of Sir Willoughby Pumppe and yourself, I commit my excellent friend with confidence, regretting that I am precluded from offering him my personal condolences ; and earnestly praying that he may be strengthened to support this heavy calamity.

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ GEO. BENGAL.”

No great degree of light, it must be confessed, was thrown upon the cause of his Lordship's absence by this mysterious missive, which might, in verity, have puzzled much wiser heads than that of Sir Oliver, and went far towards realizing the sarcastic simile of the satirist. “ As obscure as an explanatory note.”

From a review of the context in Lord Manningham's hands, however, better things were to be hoped; and although after all attempts at elucidation, much remained to be guessed at, sufficient *data* were obtained from that quarter to satisfy every one that the Bishop had been victimized by some impudent impostor.

I shall not pretend to give the letter in detail, and for this piece of forbearance I claim the especial thanks of all who hate, as much as I do, closely written epistles of three sides and a postscript, particularly as, after all, it left a great deal to be inferred. Thus much was, however, perfectly clear from its contents.

A gentleman, or one whose outward man bespoke him such, had called at the Bishop's temporary abode in London, late on the day preceding that of his intended departure;—he had announced himself as “Sir Willoughby Pumppe,” and, after apologizing, in apparent agitation, for his intrusion at so unseemly an hour, had apprised his Lordship, that the whole family of “his dear friend and relative Lord Manningham,” had just been thrown into

the greatest confusion and distress by the sudden elopement of the Hon. Miss Stafford with a *soi-disant* Polish count, a low fiddler, of the name of Wiskerewski, with whom she had unfortunately contracted an acquaintance soon after her arrival in this country.

By the aid of white teeth, black mustaches, paste shirt buttons, a profusion of rings and chains that would have put an Alderman to open shame, this person had succeeded, said "Sir Willoughby," in palming himself upon society as a nobleman expatriated for political offences, a sworn foe to autocrats, and a "martyr to the sacred cause of liberty."

The young lady, who was deeply read in the history of Thaddæus of Warsaw, wanted but a *chansonnette* or two sung in a corner *sotto voce* to the guitar,—an accomplishment, by the way, in which his Countship beat Miss Porter's hero "all to sticks"—to surrender at discretion; and these were plentifully supplied. With a degree of finesse scarcely to be expected in one so young, and acquired no doubt from the lessons of so able a tutor, she had dissembled her disinclina-

tion to the match with her cousin, on which she knew her father had set his heart, till it was on the very eve of accomplishment, and had then taken advantage of a dark night, and four stout post-horses, to give her friends the slip.

The fugitives had been traced on their route to the sea-side, and Lord Manningham, accompanied by the deserted bridegroom, had gone in pursuit of them ; but, from the start which they had got, the vicinity of the coast, and the facility of communication with the continent, little hope was entertained of overtaking them on this side the Channel.

“ Sir Willoughby ” added, that, under these untoward circumstances, he had been deputed, as a near connexion of the family, to wait upon his Lordship, and to apprise him of an event which, so much to the affliction of all parties, would render his kind offices unavailing ; and expressed the greatest possible regret at having every reason to believe, from information recently received, that the rascally Wiskerewski, who had thus carried off his noble friend’s daughter, had not only been a hanger-on in a

low gaming-house with a Greek name, but had previously figured on the Continent as an escaped *Forçat*.

Such it appeared was the sum and substance of the communication made to the astounded prelate by Sir Willoughby Pumppe.

His Lordship, having dismissed his visitor, went to bed grieved and afflicted at the misfortune of his friend, and indignant at the villany of the seducer. He left London, of course, the next morning, according to his original design, as farther delay was impossible, even could his remaining in England a few days longer have allowed him to witness the termination of an affair in which he took so strong an interest.

His arrangements were, therefore, only so far countermanded as regarded his purposed deviation from the direct route to the seaport; and the hour which he had intended to pass at Underdown Hall was devoted to writing these manifestations of his sympathy from the nearest post-town, at which he rested a short time for that purpose.

These despatched, the Right Reverend the

Bishop of Bengal and suite proceeded leisurely on to * * *, where he was received with all due attention to etiquette by the Hon. Captain Loblolly, and, having embarked under a grand salute from a regulated number of guns, set sail “in H. M. S. the Superb, 74, for the important diocese over which he had been called upon to preside,” to the immortal honour of the accuracy of the Morning Post’s reporter, and perhaps a little to the discomfiture of his hebdomadal *collaborateur*, who, however, put a good face upon the matter, and thus revised his account for the ensuing Sunday.

“We announced in our last (exclusively) an approaching marriage in high life, which has since taken place. By an inadvertency we were led into a trifling error as to the name of the bride, who is the Honourable Amelia Manningham, daughter of Viscount Stafford, and who was on this happy occasion united in the flowery bands of Hymen to her only surviving relative Mr. Charles Bullwinkle, of Underdown Hall.

“The Bishop of Bengal did not, we

understand, perform the ceremony, having been obliged to depart for Bengal (which is not in the West, but in the East Indies, as our readers will find by referring to the map in Guthrie's Geographical Grammar), on the preceding evening. His Lordship sailed in the *Superb*, 74, Capt. Fuggles (and not in the *Skeleton*, Capt. Coffin, which is ordered to Demerara in New Brunswick, with overland despatches); the gratifying task consequently devolved upon the exemplary vicar of Underdown, the Rev. Timothy Bustle, D. D. late fellow of Oriel college, Cambridge, by whom the ceremony *was* performed; so that *we were right in the main*.

“The splendid *trousseau* of the bride is the admiration of all who have been so fortunate as to see it; we consider it *extremely wrong* thus idly to lavish on an individual what would support a hundred poor families for a twelvemonth, —but if the happy pair can by such an expenditure encourage industry, and put bread into the mouths of our starving manufacturers, we think, after all, that, nevertheless, they may very possibly be *quite right*.”

The developement of this extraordinary affair gave rise, as may well be imagined, to no slight discussion among the bridal party assembled in the Cedar parlour.

Vexed and indignant as we were, there was, after all, a something so ludicrous in our position, that, had I filled any other situation than that of bridegroom-elect, it is a hundred to one that I should not have been able to forbear laughing.

At this distance of time, when the annoyance is no longer felt, and the "old familiar faces" rise before my mind's eye, the compressed lip and flashing glance of the Viscount,—the incensed floridity of the Baronet's physiognomy,—Miss Pyefinch's "My goodness me!"—and Bustle's heartfelt "Bless my soul!" cannot but give to the muscles of my countenance an expression very different from that which they exhibited on the day in question.

The Captain was the only one who retained his perfect self-possession; the single word "Curious!" alone escaped his lips, as reverting to the table his eye most unequivocally demanded

— “ Since the Bishop will not be here, had we not better begin breakfast ? ”

But this was not yet to be. I now insisted on my former proposition with respect to the reverend rector’s assistance, to which little or no opposition was ultimately offered ; some slight excuse for the prelate’s absence was made to the bride, who had hitherto been kept in a laudable state of ignorance as to what was going on : and, before the gallant officer was allowed to masticate a single custard, that ceremony was performed, which, in our case, had begun,—as it always ends,—with “ amazement.”

I became the happy husband of my beautiful and blushing Amelia, despite the *laches* of the Bishop of Bengal, and the machinations of “ Sir Willoughby Pumppe.”

CHAPTER VII.

Go to, then ! — we hope here be truths !

SHAKSPEARE.

The charge is prepared, the lawyers are met,

The judges all ranged — a terrible show !

GAY.

Monster, Away ! —

To the barren deserts fly !

Artaxerxes.

A MYSTERY.—A JOURNEY OF PLEASURE.—ANOTHER OF NECESSITY.—A SYLLOGISM.—SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENT.—
—MAJOR, MINOR, AND CONSEQUENCE.—AN ASS AND A
BAND-BOX.—A WIG AND A PRIG.—SENIORS AND JUNIORS.
—ASSUMPTION,—PERSONATION.—RESIGNATION.—THE *ill-*
BRED DOG KICKED DOWN STAIRS.

SIR WILLOUGHBY PUMPPE ? — Ay, where, who,
and what was Sir Willoughby Pumppe ?

This was a question much more easily asked
than answered : — who could he be ? — what

motive could he have for thus impeding a marriage, bothering a bishop, and throwing a whole family into confusion? — Pumppe? Lord Manningham had never heard the name, neither had Sir Oliver; it sounded low, vulgar, and monosyllabic, and savoured little of the equestrian dignity; but then the *prænomen* — Willoughby! — that at least was aristocratic, and the Baronet set himself down seriously to fathom the mystery.

Scarcely had the sound of the wheels that whirled the happy couple from the Hall sunk upon his ears, when, turning from the door whence he had waved them his farewell, Sir Oliver proceeded to what he somewhat humourously denominated his “Study.”

This was a large and well-proportioned room, which ran nearly the whole length of the south wing of the building, and, to say the truth, was much better furnished with books than the generality of manor houses even in the present day. It did not, to be sure, boast a Penny Magazine among its treasures, Sir Thomas More being the only chancellor whose works

had found a place upon its shelves ; — but then, — to say nothing of the whole law library of the learned Sir Marmaduke, replete with the Fletas, the Bractons, and the Cokes of former days, together with (Sir Oliver's magisterial oracle) Williams's edition of Burn's Justice, — a bachelor uncle of the present proprietor had devoted no inconsiderable portion of a younger brother's patrimony to the accumulation of the works of the best authors, ancient as well as modern. There had been an antiquary, too, in the family a century since, and many a rare and precious tome had Mr. Dugdale Bullwinkle there deposited, one glimpse of which would have smoothed the wrinkled front of a Ritson, electrified an Ellis, and made poor Tom Hill's * heart leap for joy.

But not to the illuminated missals, nor even to the Visitations and genealogies, still less to the

* “ This is a tract of 1486—seventeen pages originally—five only wanting—two damaged—got it for seventy-two pounds ten shillings—Caxton—only one other copy extant—that in the British Museum.” — “ And what is it about ? ” said I, innocently. — “ Why, I do *not* happen to know *that*,” said Hull (Hill) — “ Then why buy it ? ” said I.

classic productions of the Elzevir and Aldine presses, did Sir Oliver now incline. From a shelf near the fire-place, on which stood the "Burn's Justice" aforesaid, "Turpin's Farriery," the "Sporting Magazine," and a few other volumes which he sometimes opened on a rainy morning, he drew forth "Debrett," and commenced a determined consultation of his pages; but in vain did he ransack the "Baronetage," index included;—in vain was Townsend's "Catalogue of Knights," in its turn, subjected to the most scrutinizing examination;—Pumppees, indeed, he found, more or less illustrious, but not one rejoicing in the adjunct Willoughby.

After a two hours' application to every book in the room at all calculated to throw a light upon the object of his search, the persevering but baffled investigator was driven to

—"Buy!" exclaimed he, looking at me through his glass with an expression of astonishment—"I buy thousands of books!—pooh! pooh! millions, my dear Sir, in the course of a year,—but I never think of reading them. My dear friend, I have no time to read!"—Hook's *Gilbert Gurney*.

the conclusion that "the fellow was nothing else, after all, but a confounded humbug."

To Amelia and myself, meanwhile, the mystery was none. Fast as the flying steeds bore us from Underdown, they had not reached the first milestone on the London road, ere we had decided that the pseudo Mr. Stafford, James Arbuthnot, Esq., and Sir Willoughby Pumppe, were, as Mrs. Malaprop predicates of another impostor, "like Cerberus, three gentlemen in one," and all individualized in the person of my Cousin Nicholas.

Who but himself could have any object in delaying, perhaps breaking off, a marriage which he had already endeavoured to forestall?—Who but himself had "the heart to conceive, the head to contrive, and the *tongue* to execute" such a "jolly good hoax?"

The paragraph in the *Post* had evidently apprised him of our plans, and the necessarily immediate departure of the Bishop had given him a facility of defeating them. His own attempt at abduction would naturally suggest the story of the elopement, and he would rightly calcu-

late that, under the pressure of circumstances, no time would be left to the good prelate for investigation, even should any suspicion of deceit, —which was most unlikely,—arise in his mind. The disappointment, though but a temporary one, would be at once a revenge upon Amelia for her insensibility to his own *agrémens*, a punishment to her father for turning him so uncere- moniously out of the house, and a serious annoyance to myself, whom he had long honoured with an especial portion of his most particular and inveterate dislike.

All, or any, of these incitements were sufficient;—and then there was another, not less powerful, perhaps, than them all united —“it would be such desperate good fun !”

Of Nicholas and his pranks, however, I thought less and less every moment; and, though at first heartily provoked at his audacity, as well as entertaining a firm resolution of one day visiting on his head the mischievous tricks he had perpetrated, the possession of Amelia made me too happy now to waste a thought on him or his impertinences.

Domiciled in a beautiful retreat, and enjoying all the charms of a picturesque neighbourhood, together with the more substantial comforts of a delightful home — above all things, happy in each other, — time flew over our heads on silken wings, and the very name and existence of my Cousin Nicholas had almost faded from our memories, when they were recalled to my recollection by a letter from my mother, containing intelligence of his recent expulsion from the University, and the great annoyance of Sir Oliver thereat.

The reader has not, as I would fain hope, forgotten a certain reverend gentleman, one Josiah Pozzlethwayte by name, whose skill in dialectics went so far in convincing my Uncle Oliver of the improbability of his son's having been in two different places at one and the same time.

Although a sense of justice towards his pupil, not altogether unmixed, perhaps, with an eagerness to vindicate his own superintending vigilance, had, on the occasion alluded to, induced this gentleman to advocate my Cousin Nicho-

las's cause with no common zeal, it must not be thence inferred that he was himself altogether satisfied with the general conduct of that ingenious individual, or violently enamoured of his society.

Few, indeed, of his pupils had, if the truth must be told, occasioned Mr. Pozzlethwayte greater trouble and inconvenience in his capacity of bear-leader. Not to mention that his almost total absence from the lecture-room, through constant indisposition (to attend), promised no great accession of fame to the tutor from the future reputation of the pupil, the frequent escapades of Nicholas, — who, as it was the Reverend Josiah's wont to aver, was "only regular in irregularity, and only consistent in his inconsistency," — annoyed him not a little in the situation which he held as a Senior Fellow of the College, and, of course, as a *censor morum*. — Nor did the evil stop here ; — he had strong personal grounds for objecting to his conduct.

Immense as were his intellectual advantages, personal beauty was not Mr. Pozzlethwayte's

forte. — He stood about four feet nothing in his stockings, a stature, which Nicholas once affirmed in his hearing, and upon Shakspeare's authority, to have been originally that of the whole human race, to prove which assertion he quoted Portia's declaration to Shylock, that

“ All the souls that are were *four feet* once ! ”

The vileness of the pun might perhaps have induced the learned gentleman, — who hated any approach to the *paranomasia* worse than all the other rhetorical figures put together, — to pardon it, as well as the impertinence in which it originated, but this was far from being a solitary instance of my Cousin's jocoseness at his expense ; a misfortune in early life had deprived him of one of those members which, as Mene-nius tells us, in his familiar assimilation of it to a leading demagogue, “ being one of the basest, lowest, poorest, yet goes first,” — he had lost his Great Toe !

This calamity, for such it proved, had not only given a certain peculiarity to his gait, but, from the dancing-master style of progression

which it occasioned, had procured him, at the hands of his unfriends, the *sobriquet* of “Pettitoe.” — It was a point on which the nominee was peculiarly sensitive, and here again did Nicholas, to use his own expression, “touch him on the raw.”

A sympathizing *Freshman*, on being informed one day that the loss had been occasioned by the carelessness of a grocer’s foreman, who had let a hundred weight of Gloucester cheese fall upon his customer’s foot, exclaimed in the simplicity of his heart, “Good Heavens! what a shocking accident!” “*Accident?*” quoth a *Man of Standing* — “Nay, no *Accident!* every body knows that a *Toe* is a *Substance*.” — “Pardon me,” interrupted Nicholas, “you must have read your Aristotle to very little purpose, gentlemen, if you are not aware that the great Stagyrte defines a *Substance* to be ‘*To ov,*’ — now this, you will observe, is the very reverse of ‘*Toe on*’ — it is ‘*Toe off!*’”

The syllogism was reported to its subject, by “some d—d good-natured friend,” in less than half an hour from its construction.

But keenly as a *jeu de mot* is felt by many, jokes of a more mechanical and practical nature are still less welcome, and these too were not wanting.

As if for the very purpose of counterbalancing the niggardliness of Nature by the resources of Art, Mr. Pozzlethwayte had endeavoured, as it were, to atone for the deficiency of one extremity by the redundancy of the other; a magnificent peruke was his crowning glory, similar in form, and not at all inferior in bulk, to that which erst distinguished the renowned and self-be-praised scholar, whose adoption has stamped upon these horse-hair *tumuli* the designation of "*Parrish Wigs*." The amplitude of its projections seemed to set all the laws of gravity,—in every sense of the word,—at defiance, and affected the mind of the spectator with an unpleasant sensation, similar to that produced by a first view of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. The observer was involuntarily impressed with an idea of the impossibility that such a superstructure, so totally at variance with every rule of architecture, and

one the *apex* of which so much exceeded its base, could long preserve any position at all approaching to the perpendicular; at the same time its hue, and the general appearance exhibited by the woolly Acropolis six days out of the seven, made the feeling heart shudder at the probable loss of life which must necessarily attend its descent. Once a-week, however, its snowy brilliance rivalled that of Mont Blanc itself, and gave it the appearance of an impending *avalanche*.

Every Sunday morn, exactly as St. Mary's clock announced the hour of nine, did Giles Gutteridge, the stammering tonsor, emerge from his domicile in Holywell, furnished with a huge band-box, whose interior seemed bursting with the hairy wonder it contained, newly befrizzled and *poudré à la merveille*.

Now, it so happened that its owner's apartments were situated on the first floor of that side of the quadrangle which immediately fronted the gateway; it is evident, therefore, that the bearer would have to traverse one half the square before he could possibly reach them;

whereas Dr. Battles, the bursar, occupied rooms on the northern side, at a right angle with those of his friend, and, as he regularly shaved on Sundays, it was Mr. Gutteridge's professional duty to look in, on his way, and operate on the reverend functionary's chin.

On all such occasions, it was the wont of the unsuspecting barber to deposit his freight, for the nonce, upon the landing-place, outside his customer's "Oak," for the ten minutes during which he was employed within.

The sun shone clear as usual, no thunder growled, no earthquake shook the Radcliffe to its base, no awful prodigy announced impending calamity, neither were heard

"The grass-plot chains in boding notes to ring," *

when one fine morning, the hebdomadal abrasion duly performed, a cold chill struck to the very marrow of Gutteridge as he resumed his load ; — the box rose in his grasp light as a feather.

To remove the lid was the work of an in-

* *Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonari
Verbera, tum stridor ferri, tractæque catenæ.*

VIRG.

stant — it was so ! — his most horrible anticipations were fearfully realized — *abiit ! excessit ! evasit ! erupit !* — the wig was gone !

For one moment the unhappy one stood paralysed — the next, two steps, each five times as long as those ordinarily taken by

“Such men as walk in these degenerate days,”

brought him down two flights of stairs, and placed him in the very centre of the Quadrangle.

The Reverend Mr. Pozzlethwayte was at this precise instant of time busily engaged in winding up the peroration of a discourse to be delivered that very morning at St. Mary's ; — his Muse — I cannot at this moment call to mind the name of the individual among the “tuneful Nine,” who acts as the Pierian inspirer of pulpit oratory — had been unusually costive, and an unwonted stagnation of ideas had already made him long for the *avatar* of Gutteridge.

It is recorded of a celebrated Counsel, learned in the law, that he could never plead to any good purpose without a piece of string to twine round his finger while he was addressing the court — Mr. Pozzlethwayte could never compose

without his wig. While yet in the very act of consulting his watch, and wondering at the tardiness of his decorator,

“Strange sounds of grief, lamentations heard i’ the air,”

struck on his sensorium ;—he rose and applied himself to the window, when, in the very centre of the grass-plot, irreverently trampling on that sacred sod, fenced in by privilege from every tread less hallowed than that of a Senior Fellow, stood, — or rather stamped,—the infuriate Gutteridge, writhing in all the contortions of demoniacal possession.—His uplifted hands and eyes seemed as they were invoking the vengeance of all the Gods on somebody — or something, — but on whom, or what, remained a mystery.

The learned Tutor threw up the sash, and called loudly on the infuriated *Tonsor* for an explanation.

It has been already hinted that Mr. Gutteridge had, like another great orator of antiquity, a slight impediment in his speech—“ Wi—wi—wi—wi—wi ! ”—was all that could be collected from him by his interrogator, till, raising his

eyes in the direction in which the outstretched arms of the supposed maniac were pointing, a sight arrested them which froze his heart within him.

There was the Wig!—*his* Wig—THE Wig, *par excellence*, of the whole University, enshrouding the temples of the first Murderer, whose stony brow seemed to derive tenfold rigidity from the addition, while,—such fantastic tricks does Fancy play us,—a lively imagination might have traced a horrid laughter mingling with the convulsions of the expiring Abel, while even the noble and noseless Alfred, and

“Thy grim-bearded Bust, Erigena!”*

seemed to grin in ghastly glee from their elevation above the buttery hatch.

“The Wi—wi—wi—wi!”—still shrieked the frantic tonsor, but,

“Ere he could achieve the *word* proposed,”

Pozzlethwayte was already by his side, cravat-less, hat-less, trencher-less,—and, alas! wig-

* Heber.

less ;—in all the unreadiness of college *déshabille*, and presenting,—as my Cousin Nicholas, who was quietly contemplating the scene from his window, very classically observed,—“ the *beau idéal*, in every thing but size, of a

‘ Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui *Wiggum* ademptum ! ’ ”

The porters were by this time alarmed, and one of the most agile among them, climbing up the pedestal, set his foot on Abel’s shoulder, and stretched out his hand to secure the ravished peruke that frowned far, far above the reach of its bereaved owner ; but whether Æolus owed the Tutor a spite, or that the “ Little Breezes ” seized on this opportunity of avenging themselves for their constant exclusion from his chambers, the motion, occasioned by the removal of the caxon, fanned into activity the embers of a half-extinguished cigar, which had been for some time smouldering among the bushy thickets of its *occiput*.

“ Where there is so much smoke there must be some fire,” was the logical deduction of the Scout, and, as he paused to examine, the truth

of his inference was demonstrated by almost instantaneous ignition. Two or three slaps with the wig, vigorously inflicted on the back of Cain, at length extinguished the flame; but serious, not to say irreparable, damage had already been done to the comatose fabric, which still hissed, and curled, and fizzled, and sent forth odours the farthest in the world from Sabæan.

To preach before the assembled Heads of Houses in a jasey that looked and smelt like a singed sheep's head, was impossible, and, as no substitute could be found *sur le champ* for the dilapidated wig, its discomfited proprietor was obliged to seek a deputy for the preacher.

But who was the nefarious depredator?—Who the perpetrator of all this villany?—Of that no proof could be obtained, though diligently sought for. General suspicion, unquestionably, pointed at Nicholas, who had been seen in the Quad when Gutteridge was entering it, and who had even asked that individual, “H—h—h—how he d—d—did?” a sympathetic hesitation in delivery seeming to have

seized upon him in the very moment of inquiry. But he had passed on, as he declared, to his own rooms;—nobody could gainsay the fact, and moreover, he denied all knowledge of the larceny “upon his honour;”—such an averment it were heresy to doubt; still, from the undisguised amusement which he had exhibited at the window, and his subsequent introduction of a song at “the Phoenix,” which was considered to bear upon the subject, the injured Pozzlethwayte was convinced that, if not a principal in the robbery, he was at least *particeps criminis*, and “an accessory before the fact.”

“The Wig’s the thing!—the Wig,—the Wig,—
 The Wig’s the thing!—the Wig,—the Wig;
 When portly parsons claim the pig,
 And gouty aldermen look big,
 I do not say they are not wise,—
 I only say, in vulgar eyes
 The wisdom’s in the Wig!”

(*Grand Chorus of Under Graduates.*)

“The Wig!—the Wig!—the Wig!—the Wig!—
 The wisdom’s in the Wig!!”

“Such were the sounds that o’er the crested

pride " of Josiah Pozzlethwayte " scattered wild dismay," as he returned, a day or two afterwards, from evening chapel. The windows of the *Symposium* were all open, every syllable came o'er his ear, not indeed

" Like the sweet South,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,"

but with a distinctness of articulation which it needed not the remembrance of his misfortune to render complete. The voice of my Cousin Nicholas, — the *primo tenore*, — sounded high above the rest in beautiful intonation ; — the victim even fancied he saw him peeping at him over the blinds ; — from that moment all his doubts were merged in certainty, and dislike was converted into a sentiment that approximated as nearly to hatred as such a passion can be supposed to exist in " a celestial breast."

" It is easy," says a homely proverb, " to find a stick to beat a dog ;" besides, when one has positively determined that, right or wrong, the cur shall not escape castigation, a cudgel is generally kept handy. It was scarcely necessary to make occasions for complaint

against my Cousin ;—alas ! he was in the habit of affording but too many ready made ;—and it soon became apparent that a war to the knife was raging, if not openly proclaimed, between tutor and pupil.

“Crosses” and “Impositions” fell thick on the devoted head of Nicholas, who revenged himself, as best he might, by a corresponding shower of lampoons.

To this species of weapon, certain anecdotes and adventures related of Mr. Pozzlethwayte’s *première jeunesse*, rendered him peculiarly obnoxious, and “a column of advertisements from the *Times*, to be rendered into Latin verse,” inflicted upon my Cousin, was followed by a discharge of odes and epigrams, supposed to be the production of the same pen.

There was, in the days of which I speak, a *locale* in every College which corresponded, in some of its uses, — it had others — with the *Pasquin* and *Marforio* of Rome, and, as the great majority of resident members were in the habit of resorting thither, at least, once a-day, few better opportunities of disseminating

anonymous effusions could be found, than by means of an *affiche* in a situation so frequented.

Here then, did the lines alluded to constantly appear. The allusions were generally caught up; copies of the different squibs multiplied apace, and the same “good-natured friend,” of whom I have before spoken, usually placed them, with a most praiseworthy regularity, on the table of the Reverend Josiah.

Conjecture again fixed on Nicholas as the author, but again nothing appeared in the copies positively to fasten on him the imputation, —and it was considered *infra dig.* for a Senior Fellow to visit the originals, for the purpose of identifying the hand-writing; —a fallacious test after all.

The campaign was at length rather unexpectedly brought to a close, and my Cousin Nicholas, like many a great man before him, was finally defeated—by wine. In his sober senses he would have defied a world in arms, but “he, whom nor storms nor shipwreck could subdue,” fell prostrate, alas! before a batch of Burgundy.

My Cousin Nicholas had procured from the vaults of the immortal Latimer a choice case of “genuine Chambertin;” — the conventional name for a mixture of brandy and red-ink, then in high estimation among Gentlemen Commoners — a dozen of his allies were summoned, and “to it they went like French falconers;” for all who remember our Universities a quarter of a century ago, will bear sorrowful testimony to the occasional excesses, the compotations, and the revellings within those sacred walls, where now, in accordance with the better spirit of modern times, and to the everlasting honour of Father Mathew, the “men” quaff chiefly from those

“Cups that cheer but not inebriate,”

and only

“Let the *battered* toast go round.”

As none of my Cousin’s party were unpractised hands, their *sederunt* was a protracted one.

Towards midnight the mirth grew fast and furious, when Pozzlethwayte, whose ears were

invaded by the sound of their orgies, meditated an assault. He had even made his *sortie*, taken the stairs by *escalade*, and was about to dash in upon the garrison, sword (trencher) in hand, when, as his fingers yet grasped the handle of the door, the portentous sound of

“ If any presume
To come into the room,
We’ll fling the dog out of the window ! ”

echoed as an *antistrophe* by half-a-score voices in *alt*, gave him pause ;—Minerva, in the shape of cool reflection, came to his aid, and threw her protecting *ægis* around him. Gently and imperceptibly did his grasp relax,—softly, as one who treadeth on eggs, did he retrace his way across the quadrangle, and

“ With uneven footstep press the sod,”

till he reached the sanctuary of his own apartment.

Not so Nicholas and his pot-companions ;—On they went, pouring the enemy into their mouths “ to steal away the brains ” of those

who were possessed of such a commodity, till, as is not uncommon with persons puffed up, whether by wine or vanity, a general vituperation of "things as they are," was succeeded by an eager longing after "things as they ought to be."

The Grass-plot! — what a piece of "ecclesiastical tyranny" that none should be allowed to tread upon it under the degree of A. M. ! — what a piece of folly that it should be a grass-plot at all ! — a useless, uncropped, four-cornered bit of pasture ! — browsed by no herd, — enamelled with no flock ! — wasting its 'greenery' on the desert air, and altogether unprofitable to man and beast.

"Then, too, the miserable and stunted shrubs that deformed the Principal's garden ! — green to no purpose, — fragrant to no end ; — who saw them ? — who enjoyed them ? — No one, — or next to none. — It was a wanton waste of the gifts of Nature — the thing must be reformed ! — aye, Radical Reform ! that was what was wanting ! " —

And accordingly the "New, Grand, Bota-

nico-horticultural and Agricultural Society of King's Hall and College of Brasenose" was established on the spot, with my Cousin Nicholas for its President.

Sofas from the neighbouring rooms were put in instant requisition, and formed admirable substitutes for ploughs and drills to break up and convert the much abused pasture into arable land; while the laurels, myrtles, with such other shrubs as were not too firmly imbedded in the soil for ready extraction, yielded to the united energies of the "Reforming Committee," and, instead of languishing as heretofore in isolated insignificance, formed, when duly arranged against the Vice-Principal's door, a bower, scarce inferior to that of our first parents' in Paradise, as described by the immortal Milton.—In one respect it may even be said to have had the advantage over it;—Adam's "Proud Alcove" was altogether innocent of candles, but here were lights innumerable;—wax from the rooms, —lamps from the stairs,—lanterns from —nobody knows where:—the very scout's "muttons" were called into play,

till the “enterprising Mr. Gee” himself, could he have witnessed the brilliance of this Academic Vauxhall, would have confessed himself outdone, and have blushed to charge “a shilling” for the inferior glories of his gala nights.

Alas ! alas ! why is it that all human joys are so evanescent ? why is it that we find them ever

“ Like clouds that tint the morning skies,
As bright—as transient too ? ”

The “bright clouds” of the poet had hardly begun “to tint the morning skies” at all, when an irruption of the College Janissaries disturbed the philanthropists in the very height of their enjoyment. They who could run did run,—they who could not run fell,—and were picked up again ; while my Cousin Nicholas, their illustrious President and Arch-Reformer, covered with grease and glory, was captured and conducted to his couch, hiccuping as he sank into the arms of Morpheus,

“ What have we with day to do ? —(hic—)
Sons of Care,”—(hic !)—

mind you put out the lights, you d—d rascals ! ”

My Cousin Nicholas had now reached the zenith of his academical career, and we have henceforward only to

“Mark the mild lustre that gilt his decline !”

On awaking the next morning he found, Wolsey-like, that a killing frost had nipped his root, that he, “good easy man,” was about to fall “never to rise again”—in Oxford;—therefore, with all that firmness of purpose, and promptness of decision, which are the distinguishing characteristics of great minds, he resolved so to dispose his robe as to fall with dignity.

A summons before the Seniority he anticipated, nor did he deceive himself as to its necessary result. But the emergency found him not unprepared for it; he had long since contemplated the possibility of such an event taking place, and his mighty soul rose equal to the occasion.

It was past one o'clock p. m.—The various classes had been dismissed, and the Common Room already exhibited his

“Judges all met, a terrible show.”

At the upper end of the apartment sat the Principal, and the Fellows were arranging themselves to his right and left according to their standing.—The immediate appearance of the delinquents,—for two other of the rioters were included in the same bill of attainder,—was expected, when the door opened, and Sir Lawrence O'Thwackes and Mr. St. John Gomerrily, Gentlemen Commoners both, entered the room.

My Cousin Nicholas did not appear, but the space he should have filled was occupied by the Rev. Josiah Pozzlethwayte in person, who, acting as “bodkin” to the other two, advanced with them, in his usual saltatory style, to the bottom of the table.

His unexpected appearance in such a situation arrested the embryo rebuke already trembling on the lips of the Principal. That dignitary gazed on the apparition before him with astonishment. One instant previous he had been consulting with the very gentleman now *vis-à-vis* to him, and had received his vote for the ostracism of all the offenders.—How he could have left the room in the interval

was amazing !—Yet there he stood,—arrayed in his snuff embrowned suit of sables, with wig, green goggles, and pointed toe,—perfect in his individuality.

An exclamation from his right drew off the President's attention ; he turned, and, to his consternation,—I will not say horror,—beheld there another Pozzlethwayte !—*alter et idem* !—in wig,—in goggles,—and in toe he was the same,—but evidently quivering with suppressed agitation, while his “double,” at the other end of the room, stood regarding the scene with the most complacent equanimity.

“Bless me ! what can be the meaning of all this ?” asked the astounded “Head.”

“*Mon Dieu ! il y en est deux !*” quoth the junior Fellow, as he quoted the despairing exclamation of the French profligate.

“Bless my heart !”—“why, Mr. Pozzlethwayte !”—“why, who on earth is this ?”—&c. &c. &c.—burst simultaneously from different members of the congress as the Seniority rose in confusion ;—meanwhile the two accused, and their extraordinary middle-man, preserved

their composure, and appeared to be the only unembarrassed persons in the whole assembly.

The *agitated* Pozzlethwayte at length found voice, and, pointing to Pozzlethwayte the *composed*,

“ See ! ” he exclaimed, “ see, gentlemen !— I knew how it would be !— it is all a part of the system—all done to harass and annoy *me*—I was sure it would be so ”——

“ What is the meaning of this absurd masquerade ? ” interrupted the Principal, now thoroughly certified by the voice as to which was the real Simon Pure ;—“ who are you, Sir ?— and where is Mr. Bullwinkle ? ”

“ Here, Sir, at your orders,” returned the fictitious Pozzlethwayte, reverently bowing as he raised his glasses, and darting from beneath them glances of tenfold obliquity upon the company.

“ What do you mean, Sir, by presenting yourself in this ridiculous dress ? ”

“ Ridiculous ? — pardon me, Sir,” replied Nicholas, with much seeming humility, “ I have, I regret to say, too often been reproved for

unintentional violation of the University costume, and a *Cross* was placed against my name no longer ago than last week on that very account, by my respected tutor who now sits beside you ; — I have since determined to make him my model in dress, as in everything else, —and, to say the truth, my friends flatter me by declaring that I have succeeded indifferently well.”

The cool impudence of this reply was not to be borne ; — the Seniority rose *en masse*, and soon after broke up “in much admired disorder.”

Mr. Bullwinkle and his tittering companions were in the meantime ordered to withdraw, and in the course of the day received jointly and severally, an official intimation that they “were no longer to consider themselves members of that University.”

And so my Cousin Nicholas took his leave of Oxford.

HIC CESTUS ARTEMQUE REPONIT !

CHAPTER VIII.

—— The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
Macbeth.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child !
Lear.

A BARONET IN A PUCKER—IN A COFFIN.—GRIEF AND
REMORSE.—TOO LATE !—RESUSCITATION.

SIR OLIVER'S wrath was, as I well knew it would be, fearful ; — sentence of the greater excommunication and perpetual banishment was forthwith pronounced against the principal offender. I say the principal, because, although Nicholas unquestionably came in for the chief portion of his indignation, yet the various members of the " Seniority " were by no means absolved in his estimation. They had disgraced

a Bullwinkle ! and that act, whether done justly or unjustly,—with or without a sufficing reason — was, in the eyes of the representative of the redoubted Roger, nothing less than a high crime and misdemeanour.

Letters which we received about this time, both from my mother and Miss Pyefinch, concurred in representing the Baronet as having been in a state of continued excitement, almost amounting to frenzy, from the moment of his receiving the Principal's official notification of the removal of his son's name from the books, together with a statement of the cause of his having been thus unceremoniously sent to the right about.

All this I fully expected to hear, but, I own, I was not prepared for the shock which followed, and which exhibited to me the misconduct of Nicholas in still more glaring colours.

His follies and improprieties had at length made him little less than a parrieide ; and, as I read the following paragraph from a London journal, which I took up accidentally at a little inn in the Isle of Wight, whither Amelia and

myself had gone on a short excursion, I was not more grieved at the event which it announced, than shocked by the conviction that his son's misbehaviour had broken the poor old gentleman's heart.

At the head of the list of deaths was—

“ Suddenly, of apoplexy, at his seat, Underdown Hall, Kent, Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, Bart., in the sixty-third year of his age. He is succeeded in his title and estates by his only son and heir, now Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle.”

Poor Sir Oliver ! — This, then, was the end of all his hopes and fears — of all his cares and anxieties for the welfare of one who had as surely destroyed him as if he had plunged a knife into his bosom !

Poor Uncle Oliver !—Till this moment I had never known how much I had loved him. To me his kindness had been, from the very first, as warm as it was undeviating ; and I well knew that in his affections I held a place second only to that so unworthily occupied by his heartless offspring.

The date of the announcement was that of

the third day after we had quitted the Abbey, on the little tour I have alluded to, and where, I doubted not, full details of the melancholy event were even at this moment awaiting my return. But my course was already determined on; and, crossing over that very day to Portsmouth, I sent Amelia home under the protection of her servants, and placing myself in the mail, reached London at an early hour on the following morning.

Notwithstanding his eccentricities, my mother was, as I well knew, deeply, fondly attached to her departed brother, and would at such a time need all the consolation a son's attentions could bestow. Besides, Underdown Hall was now the property of my Cousin Nicholas; and under any roof which called him master, I was certain she would not choose to remain one moment longer than might be absolutely necessary.

I had partaken of some slight refreshment at the hotel, and had ordered a chaise and four to be got in readiness as quickly as possible, while I just stepped out to give my tailor some

orders, rendered necessary by the melancholy event that had occurred, when, as I turned the corner of Sackville Street, my arm was grasped from behind.

I stopped, and beheld my Cousin Nicholas himself.

He was dressed in deep mourning ; and, to do him justice, I never saw grief and affliction more strongly depicted in any one's countenance in my life. It was some time before he could find words to address me ; they seemed, like Macbeth's, to "stick in his throat," and the big drops stood on his forehead, while a convulsive choking appeared to impede his utterance. The encounter was an unexpected one to both of us, and, to me at least, unwelcome. I gazed at him in silence ; tears at last came to his relief. —"Charles !" he exclaimed, in a voice scarcely audible from emotion, "for Heaven's sake, pity me !—I have murdered my poor father !"

Incensed against him as I was, and not without reason, on my own account, there was a something so truly pitiable in his whole appearance, in the misery expressed by his glazed

eye and hollow cheek, that, spite of myself, I could not look at him without feeling my anger sensibly giving way to compassion. It was not at such a moment, at all events, that I could dwell on personal injuries ; it was no time for revenge, or for heaping reproaches on one whom the bitterest remorse had already stricken to the earth. I took Sir Nicholas by the arm, and retraced my steps with him to the Clarendon.

When at length his emotion permitted him to speak, I learned that he had but just arrived in town, having preceded me to London by little more than twenty-four hours.

On leaving the University, he told me he had taken up his temporary abode with his friend Hanbury, in Sussex, where he had intended to remain till time and the mediation of friends should so far induce his father's wrath to relax, as to hold out to him some hope of a reconciliation. The absurdity of his late conduct, and the injury done by it to his own character and prospects in life, had, as he assured me, already made a very strong impression upon him ; the lesson he had received had not been thrown away ; and

he had fully made up his mind to discard his follies, abandon his mischievous frolics for ever, and to do everything in his power towards regaining the place which he felt he had forfeited, both in society, and in the affections of his friends.

“Incredible as you may perhaps think it, Cousin Charles,” he added, “it was on yourself that I placed my firmest reliance. — To you I have much to answer for — more perhaps than you are even now aware of. I have acted by you like a scoundrel and a madman — yet on you, I repeat, I had rested all my hopes of obtaining my father’s forgiveness, and the pardon of others whom I have still more grossly sinned against. Grave cause as you have against me — for I know you too well to suppose I could make you more than temporarily my dupe — I had made up my mind to write to you — to throw myself on your mercy — to confess to you the whole of my folly, — my madness, — and to plead the only, the miserable excuse that exists for my infatuated conduct when, to

my utter consternation, the papers informed me of the deplorable ——”

He covered his face with his hands, burst into a flood of tears, and seemed as if he would have knelt before me.

I shrank from so degrading an act of self-abasement, and, in a tone which, I fear, had at least as much of contempt as pity in it, desired him to compose himself.

My Cousin Nicholas would have proceeded to confession, but I stopped him at once with the remark, that other matters had at present a prior demand on the attention of both of us.

He had come, as I now found, to London immediately, on reading the account of his father's decease in the papers, and had already employed the time during which he had been in town in despatching the necessary tradesmen and orders to the Hall, for the performance of the late Baronet's obsequies, in a manner suitable to the rank and station which he had so recently held in the county. Having

just completed his arrangements, he was about to proceed to Underdown, when he saw me pass a shop, in which he was making the last purchases requisite for his journey, and arrested my progress as I have mentioned.

Finding that I was myself about to proceed to the same destination, he now requested to be permitted to accompany me down, adding, that it would give him the opportunity for which he so earnestly longed, of making his avowal, and of affording to me and mine all the reparation yet in his power.

After some little hesitation, I agreed to his proposal, and having briefly written to my several tradesmen such directions as were necessary, we stepped into the chaise, which was waiting for me, and set out together at a rapid pace for the Hall.

Scarcely were we fairly launched from the stony breakers of Bond Street, into the smooth water of Macadamization, when my Cousin Nicholas began, as he phrased it, "to make a clean breast of it," and with every token of

sincere contrition, went into a recapitulation of his offences against us all.

He told me, that at our never-to-be-forgotten interview with her at the theatre, the impression made upon him by Amelia's beauty was not inferior to that which it had produced upon myself—that he had, in short, to use his own expression, “fallen deeply, madly in love with her at first sight;” but that this passion, like many of a similar kind which had preceded it, might perhaps have yielded to time and absence, had not a combination of fortuitous circumstances occurred to foster and increase its force.

It will be recollected, that on parting with me in Jermyn Street,—after I had, as we both then thought, safely marked down my bird at Mrs. Morgan's,—Nicholas had repaired to what—such is the retrogression of modern refinement—*may* now be mentioned, even to ears polite, as a “Hell,” in the vicinity.

The usual flocks of rooks and pigeons were found congregated within its interior, and, flush

with the supply so recently received from myself, he plunged at once into all the mysteries of *rouge et noir*.

A very few deals had taken place, when an "intelligencer" entered with the news of an attack meditated by the police, and appointed to take place that very night. The party broke up abruptly, and Nicholas, who had been hitherto a winner, and was not sorry for so good an excuse to pocket his earnings, found himself once more in the street.

As he passed Mrs. Morgan's door, the often-mentioned dark green chariot caught his eye, with Amelia and her antiquated *chaperon* in the act of getting into it.

The real state of the case flashed at once upon him, and as the carriage drove leisurely along, he had no difficulty in keeping it in view, till he saw it finally deposit its lovely freight at her father's mansion.

His first impulse was, as he assured me, to make me acquainted with the discovery, but, alas, the event proved that the warning of the bard is not an idle one—

“ Friendship, take heed !—if woman interfere,
Be sure the hour of thy destruction ’s near ! ”

After what he declared to have been a very severe struggle, passion prevailed over principle, and my Cousin found himself unable to renounce the advantage which his knowledge of the residence of our fair *incognita* gave him over me, his rival.

When he had ascertained the real name and condition of the lady, and her relationship to myself,—all which he had accomplished, without difficulty, during the interval of my journey to Underdown,—the struggle, he protested, recommenced, and when, on the evening of my return to town, I had made him my confidant with respect to Lord Manningham’s intentions in my favour, the secret was actually upon his lips.

But my evil Genius, it seems, again prevailed, and accident again secured his triumph.

“ How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done ! ”

“Had you not incautiously let fall that letter of your mother’s, Cousin Charles, I verily believe I should yet have proved honest to you, and, after diverting myself a little longer with your perplexities, have at once removed them; but the temptation was irresistible.—One moment only was your attention distracted by the waiter, but that moment was decisive—to seize,—to exchange the letter for one of my own, was the work of an instant;—the hurry with which you followed me in pursuit of an *ignis fatuus*, conjured up, I confess, for my purpose, forbade all examination, and I saw, with triumph, that my hastily formed plan had succeeded; the substituted epistle was already in your pocket.

“A thousand and a thousand times during the remainder of that day did conscience fly in my face, and tell me that I was acting most unworthily;—a thousand times did I resolve to confess all to you, to restore the letter I had purloined, and trust to your affection for my pardon; but then the image of Amelia rose in beauty before me,—and the die was cast.

“With my subsequent conduct you must be but too well acquainted ; its only palliation is, that I was no longer my own master ; every thought, every feeling of right and wrong, was absorbed in the one hope of obtaining, by any means, the paragon of her sex.

“A very few days, as I was well assured, were all that would be afforded me, ere the imposture must inevitably be discovered ; my own imprudence contributed to shorten even that brief interval, and, in a moment of infatuation and despair, I was hurried into that Quixotic enterprise which infatuation and despair alone could have inspired.”

“Nay,” he continued, “I will own, that, from the date of my more intimate acquaintance with Miss Stafford and her perfections, the strongest personal jealousy of yourself was added to my other bad passions ; and this, together with the envy at your good fortune which it excited, induced me subsequently to play off a most abominable trick upon the Bishop of Bengal, which would, as I hoped,

have the effect of deferring, if only for a few hours, a marriage so destructive to all my hopes, and one which I could not bear to think upon.

“ But oh ! Charles,” continued he, seeing my colour rising, for my patience here was sorely tried, “ spare me,—spare me, I beseech you, the reproaches which I so justly merit ; think,—think what my feelings must be at such a moment as this, when I avow that, guilty as I have been towards *you*, there is another crime that lies yet heavier on my heart,—my poor, poor father !—yes, Charles, it is but too true that the individual who so atrociously insulted him was his own son ! ”

“ I had not, I scarce need say, quitted London as you believed, but had accompanied Captain Hanbury, the brother of a college friend of mine, to the theatre, when, to my astonishment no less than alarm, I came plump upon Sir Oliver ;—I knew all the consequences of his finding me in London ;—I knew the violence of his anger when thoroughly provoked ; not an instant was

left me for consideration,—What was to be done?—I denied, disowned, gracious Heaven!—I even threatened him!”

A violent burst of anguish here interrupted the speaker, nor could I help being moved by the bitterness of his remorse.

Resentment again gave way to compassion; I could not—no, I *could* not trample on the self-abased creature beside me, I could not quench the smoking flax, nor bruise the broken reed:—he had behaved scandalously, it is true, but he was miserable—the image of his dead father, too,—of that father who had so loved us both, seemed to rise between us, and demand forgiveness for his erring but repentant child.

Before we had reached Dartford I had solemnly accorded to my Cousin Nicholas an entire amnesty, and had ventured to promise him as much on the part of Amelia.

From this moment I endeavoured to change the subject, and to converse with him on his own affairs—on his future plans and prospects

—but found it exceedingly difficult to withdraw his mind at all from the course of bitter self-reproach which his thoughts had taken.

He was perpetually reverting to the subject of the disgraceful conduct he had pursued towards his father.

A chaise and four, he told me, and the connivance of the college porter, had enabled him to anticipate the arrival of Sir Oliver in Oxford,—which he was sure would follow,—by several hours, and, secure in the secrecy of his friend the Captain, who had promised to keep out of the way for a day or two, he had managed to escape detection by the connivance of the College servants;—but the remembrance of his behaviour on that occasion to a parent who so doted on him would, he continued to assure me, embitter every moment of his future existence. He spoke of himself as of one of the worst of murderers, and it was almost impossible to divert him from these gloomy reflections, or to draw his attention to the state of his worldly concerns.

From what at length fell from him, however,

I gathered that his pecuniary embarrassments were in fact much more considerable than I had anticipated ; he even hinted at the probability that a temporary visit to the Continent might be advisable, if not absolutely necessary.

This was an idea which I rather encouraged than repressed ; as, though I had made up my mind not to refuse my assistance towards extricating him from his difficulties, it struck me that, for many reasons, his absence from England, for the present, would be a relief to all parties.

When we reached Sittingbourne, we stopped to change horses and alighted to partake of some refreshment at the Rose, and here,—as as I verily believe for the first time in his life,—did the appetite of Nicholas altogether fail him ;—he forced down a mouthful or two with difficulty, and remained totally absorbed in his own thoughts, which continued to be apparently of the most painful description ; what was yet more extraordinary he did not show the slightest inclination to fly to his old resource, the bottle, for relief, nor was it with-

out great persuasion on my part that he was at length, with difficulty, induced to swallow a single glass of sherry :—I wanted no other proof of the sincerity of his grief,—at least for the time being.

At a short distance below the village above named, the approach to the Hall diverged from the great turnpike road to Dover, and turning abruptly to the right, after meandering for several miles through a rich and varied country, brought us once more to the well-known entrance of the Underdown domain.

The sun had set in glory, and the shades of twilight were fast closing in upon a lovely evening, as we reached the well-remembered avenue, whose majestic trees, the venerable growth of centuries, threw a still darker shadow upon all beneath them.

At the extremity nearest to the mansion, and at a right angle with one corner of the building, rose a splendid oak, “the monarch of the wood,” standing, as it were, proudly aloof—it had been Sir Oliver’s favourite tree.

A rustic bench encircled its time-worn trunk,

and here, a hundred and a hundred times, had I seen my poor Uncle in happier days, gazing with an honest pride upon the silvan scene before him,—the fair domain transmitted down to him from so many Bullwinkles,—now like himself at peace,—while he inhaled the sedative fragrance of a pipe of the best Virginia.

Alas ! poor Uncle Oliver !—never again should I behold that open friendly countenance, in which might be read, as in a book, every thought of his guileless heart ! — never again should I encounter the kindly glance of that eye beaming on me with all but paternal love ! — never again receive the fervent pressure of that hearty and affectionate grasp ! — never again should I hear ——

Why, what on earth was that ? — How deceptive the unreal mockeries of fancy !

“ And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown,”

how often does she, in her vagaries,

“ Give to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name ! ”

I could have sworn, at the very moment that these, and thoughts like these, were rushing on my mind in an overwhelming flood of fond reminiscence — even then I could have sworn that I heard again that voice, now hushed for ever by the still, cold hand of death — that very cough, too, which exhibited the strength, rather than the weakness, of my poor Uncle's lungs, seemed to issue again, as heretofore, from beneath the tree of his love, — nay, I could almost have believed that a dim and shadowy form, resembling that of him that was gone, was yet hovering around its gnarled and knotty trunk.

The same, or some similar idea seemed to have stricken my Cousin Nicholas, for, rousing himself from the corner of the chaise in which he had been for some time silently reclining, he suddenly exclaimed, with a vivacity that startled me.

“ Gracious heaven ! what is this ? ”

Then breaking one of the front glasses in his eagerness to let it down, he called loudly to the drivers to stop.

My eye followed the direction of his own, and again, to my thinking, I saw my Uncle Oliver, "in his habit as he lived," rise deliberately from the accustomed seat, and advance towards the carriage.

Nicholas uttered a shriek, and sprang from the vehicle. Before I could follow he was on his knees upon the greensward, his hands uplifted, and his eyes starting from his head with horror.

"Father!—dear father!" he cried in agony, "come not from the grave to curse your son. Pardon!—oh pardon!"—

He fell upon his face as he spoke, and I was electrified as I distinctly heard the phantom reply to his adjuration, — "Go to the devil, you infernal Scoundrel!"

A mist seemed to gather on my senses, and I could scarcely summon up resolution enough to quit the chaise. When, however, I had accomplished my descent, there still lay Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle, literally writhing with agony on the turf.

"Mercy! mercy!" came from his lips, in

suffocating accents —“ Pardon ! Mercy !—Forgive, blest Shade !——”

“ Blest fool’s-head !” returned the Spectre, to my indescribable astonishment. “ Get up this instant, you rascal, and don’t lie sprawling there.”

And it looked all the while so like the late Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, that, had I not known him to be defunct, I could have made oath it was his very self.

“ Get up, I say, scoundrel !” continued the *Eidolon* ; and, at the same moment, the sound of a kick, from what seemed to be its foot, as the shadowy member vehemently encountered the most undefended part of my Cousin Nicholas’s person, excited in my mind a strong suspicion of its materiality.

Mine eye had by this time “ well examined the parts ” of the apparition, and

“ Found them perfect Oliver.”

“ Good heavens !” I exclaimed, “ can it be ? — Sir Oliver ? — and you really are *not* dead ?”

“ Dead ?—Dead be d—d !” quoth the Spirit,—

ejaculating as if on purpose to illustrate that obscure line of Gray's —

“Even in our ashes live their wonted fires !”

“No more dead than yourself, if you come to that ! — All a bam of that rascally newspaper — put in by some lying vagabond on purpose — this fellow as likely as anybody !”

And so it was ! — so it must be — a hundred circumstances flashed on my memory to prove it — his difficulties, his debts, his menaced incarceration ! — Mr. Bullwinkle, *ci-devant* of Brasenose, — the disgraced of Oxford, — the discarded of his father, — the rejected of Rabbi Aaron Ximenes, — could not, as a *desdichado*, have preserved his personal liberty one single week ; — it was reserved for the brilliant genius of my Cousin Nicholas thus to turn disaster into victory, and, by a splendid *coup de maitre*, to convert foes into auxiliaries, drawing supplies from the very quarters whence he had the most to apprehend.

His Tailor, like many, — not to say most, — of the West-End *Schneiders*, dealt at least as much

in bills as breeches, and “ Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle,” the youthful and extravagant baronet of six thousand a-year, not only obtained an immediate cessation of the hostilities proclaimed against “ N. Bullwinkle, *Esquire*,” but found every “ accommodation ” he could require “ on the most reasonable terms,” while, as no “ Grand-National-United-Tailors’-Strike ” was in those unenlightened days so much as dreamt of in the most glowing visions of the Humes and Owens, complete mourning for the whole of his embryonic establishments in town and country was promised, without fear of failure, “ at six hours’ notice,” and the professional credit of Mr. Kerseymere Kite pledged for its delivery within the time.

Messrs. Birdseye, Mapleton, and Company, who had not long since furnished a pleasant little retreat in the King’s Road, Fulham, for a female relation of the Bullwinkles, — whose name, by the way, Sir Oliver had most unaccountably omitted to register in the family pedigree, but for whose ottomans, *chiffonnières*, and *chaises longues*, my Cousin Nicholas had

very generously made himself responsible, — were no less polite. An order for a splendid funeral, and for the hanging Underdown Church with the finest black broad cloth, accompanied with a hint that the heir was rather short of ready cash, till “the will should be proved, and arrangements made with the bankers,” were both immediately taken. The deceased Baronet, it was faithfully promised by the Birds-eye polyonomy, should be interred in a manner worthy the dignified representative of the Conqueror’s Standard-bearer; while a cheque for five hundred pounds, offered, and, I need scarcely say, accepted, as a temporary loan, evinced at once the opulence and the liberality of the firm.

Though not fully aware of all these and similar particulars at the moment, Nicholas had, in the course of the communications which he had made to me, said enough to furnish me with a clue to his whole plot. Doubtless he had taken his measures too well to permit any proof to exist that he was, in fact, the fabricator of the paragraph of which he had

thus reaped the benefit, and of which, in common with the rest of us, he would, no doubt, profess to have been the dupe.

In the meanwhile, he had succeeded in freeing himself, for a time, at least, from importunity, not to say a jail;—he had raised the wind for his intended Continental excursion,—the only part of his story I now believed in,—and he had, moreover, succeeded, by means of this “jolly good hoax,” in “humbugging” me into a condonation which, disgusted as I was with him, it was quite impossible for me, as a gentleman, to retract.

Such consummate duplicity, however, precluded the possibility of my taking any farther notice of him. Seizing, therefore, Sir Oliver’s arm, we turned together towards the Hall, leaving the penitent to the full enjoyment of his raptures at finding his father still in the land of the living, and to rub off, at his leisure, the verdure which his black net “tights” had contracted from his long-continued genuflexions on the moist grass.

CHAPTER IX.

Nay then, let the Devil wear black !

HAMLET.

Go hop me over every kennel home,
For you shall hop without my custom, Sir.

PETRUCHIO.

UNEXPECTED VISITORS.—MORE FREE THAN WELCOME.—
“DON’T YOU WISH YOU MAY GET IT?”—AN ATTACK.—
AN AMBUSCADE.—A REPULSE.—A RETREAT.

SIR OLIVER and myself pursued our way towards the house ; and it would not have been very easy to determine which of the two felt the most astonished and gratified at so unexpectedly encountering the other,—one a dear friend whom he believed to be dead,—the other a no less dear relative whom he knew to be married.

As both these conditions are apt to imply a separation from former ties and habits to a rather considerable extent, a sudden reunion, like the present, had, for hearts such as ours, a more than ordinary charm. My mother's surprise at seeing me was extreme ; so was that of Miss Pyefinch, and far more vociferous. Had the resurrection from the "mools" been one on my part instead of my Uncle's, her wonderment could scarcely have been greater.

My last communication had been dated from Belvoir Abbey, the day before our quitting it for Ryde, and both the ladies believed Amelia and myself to be at this moment ruralizing among the romantic glades of Shanklin. The penetrating Kitty, however, hit the right nail upon the head in a twinkling. "He has seen Sir Oliver's decease in the papers, and is come home to comfort us !"

"But do not believe it — it is all nothing but nonsense," continued the poetess ; "dear Sir Oliver is not dead, and never has been dead at all !"

I assured her that I gave implicit credit to

her statement ; and the honest joy which sparkled in her eye lost nothing of its intensity from the pleasing self-importance which we all derive from being the first to communicate positive and authentic intelligence.

When the *éclat* of my arrival had a little subsided, I was told a tale which, while it added fresh fuel to the scarcely-slumbering embers of my wrath, it was impossible to hear, as Miss Kitty and Jennings respectively delivered it, without feeling at least as much disposition to laughter as indignation.

The Liberal journal in which the obnoxious paragraph had appeared was of course one never seen at the Hall, where, as was the case with nine out of ten of the County families, all were of strong Conservative principles.

The first intimation which Sir Oliver had of his own decease was from a spruce-looking gentleman in a suit of sables, the sprightliness of whose manner, and the smug familiarity of whose address, comported but badly with the lugubrious character of his habiliments and the solemnity of his errand.

The Baronet, after discussing his usual ample breakfast, was taking his morning's stroll about the grounds, and had reached the end of the avenue, where he stood leaning over the gate, in a picktooth attitude, and looking as if he thought he was thinking, when a smart, flashy, "buggy," freighted with the dapper gentleman aforesaid, drew up before him.

"Hunderdown 'All, hold gentleman, eh?—They told us first gate with bulls' heads on the *postes*."

"They were quite right," replied my Uncle. "This is the road to the Hall; and what, pray, may be your pleasure there, Sir?"

"Pleasure?—oh, no pleasure in life, hold boy—quite the *con-tra-ry*—no pleasure! hall bizzness—come to measure Sir Holiver for his coffin."

"The d—l you are!" said the astounded Baronet; "and what rascal, pray, sent you here on such an errand?"

"Rascal?—Vot do you mean by that, you foul-mouthed old buffer?—I tell you, I belongs to Birdseye, Mapleton, and Co., the first hun-

dertakers in Lunnun, and I comes to manage the old jockey's funeral ;—so open the gate at vonce, and mind my mare,—she's an 'ell of a kicker."

" So am I," said Sir Oliver, whose bristles were by this time thoroughly up ; " and curse me if I don't kick you round the park if you dare put your foot into it.—You make Sir Oliver's coffin, you son of a cinder-sifter !—Sir Oliver would see you d—d first."

" Oh, vot you thinks to do it yourself, I s' pose,—von of the hold boy's country *rums*, vot does carpenter's vork, and mends his barnses !—It's no go, hold chap,—Sir Nicholas has given *us* the job, I tell ye, so you may as vell mizzle at vonce."

" Sir who ?" roared Sir Oliver.

" Vy, Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle, to be sure,—who else ? The young Barrownight as is.—So open the gate vide, vill ye ? and don't stand jawing there all day !"

It was lucky perhaps that a light, open van drew up to the gate at this precise moment ; the Baronet was thoroughly exasperated, and

an assault and battery upon the gentleman in the gig would, in all probability have wound up the colloquy. As the metropolitan Jehu, however, had begun to back his kicking mare a little at the first sight of his opponent's manifestations of determined hostility, the humbler vehicle "cut in" before him.

"Be this the road to Underdown Hall, Sir?" asked the lad who drove it, respectfully touching his hat.

"Yes, my man,—what have you got there?"

"Bullwinkle arms, Sir," answered the driver;—and there, sure enough, did the astonished eyes of Sir Oliver behold, in the back of the cart and bolt upright, a splendid escutcheon, within a black, lozenge-shaped frame, some six feet by five in measurement, charged with the "golden fetterlocks in the azure field," and the "bloody hand" in a canton; the whole surmounted by the equestrian helmet, bearing a bull's head *proper*, horned and coupé *Or*—his family coat in full and gorgeous blazonry—the only perceptible difference was, that in lieu of the motto, *Sans peur et sans reproche*, the single word *Resurgam* was

conspicuous on the scroll, beneath which grinned horribly a death's head, flanked with a bat's wings, and having a couple of thigh bones crossed in *saltier* under its chin.

At the very glimpse of an heraldic bearing, Sir Oliver had thrown open the gate, and the van had fairly entered the park before he caught sight of the ominous label, or fully comprehended the purpose to which the achievement was intended to be applied.

"Where are you carrying that thing? and what are you going to do with it?" he inquired, in an astonishment, which began to partake somewhat of alarm.

"Hang it over the hall door, Sir," said the lad civilly; "the men will be here directly."

"Why, who is dead, boy?"

"Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, Esquire.—Cheep—cheep!"—and the horse, in obedience to the well-known signal, trotted on with his light burden along the vista.

"Vot, didn't you know it, my covey?" quoth the foreman of Messrs. Birdseye, Mapleton, and Company, who had seized the opportunity to

drive through the yawning portal himself. "Vy, lawk love 'ee, he's as dead as 'Arry the *Heighth*, and 'as been these three days; vy, it's in hall the papers."

The Baronet fell back, absolutely confounded, and the " 'ell of a kicker " bore the " buggy " and its contents rapidly on towards the house.

My Uncle's annoyances unfortunately did not terminate here; it is true, that the united testimony of men and maids did at length, sorely to his amazement, convince the worthy agent of the Birdseye firm that he was in error, and " conglomerated " his faculties pretty considerably in his turn, while the achievement was sent back, not without blessings, to the place from which it came; but scarcely had Sir Oliver doffed his corduroys and " continuations," and was preparing to sit down to dinner in dove-coloured hose and clean linen, the latter adorned with a most magnificent redundancy of frill, when the sound of wheels was again heard approaching the mansion.

" Somebody come to dinner," quoth the Baronet; " well, so much the better—glad of it—

been plagued and bothered all day—shall like a chat,—Pyefinch, you're an infernal dummy,—may as well talk to the cat."

The Captain raised his eyes, but seemed to think no answer necessary.

A carriage now stopped at the door, and the parlour windows being partly open, a voice was heard inquiring if "the Baronet was at home?" The rattle of the steps, which followed, proved that the answer had been satisfactory, and that the unexpected guest had alighted.

"Two gentlemen to wait on you, Sir Oliver."

"Show 'em in here, Jennings, — glad to see them — lay more plates — who the d—l are they?"

"Mr. Jones and Mr. Simpson?" said the butler, announcing two respectable looking personages in travelling dresses, who followed him into the room.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen; — walk in — glad to see you — come to dine, I hope? — be on table in a minute."

"You are extremely kind, sir — very much

obliged — but really not at all prepared — did not expect the honour — a little business.”

“Pooh! pooh! no ceremony here — d—n dress and all that — business? — very well — talk of business after dinner. — My sister, gentlemen, — Miss Pyefinch — Captain Pyefinch — sister, Mr. Sampson and Mr. Thingummee — Jennings, dinner!”

“Yes, Sir Oliver,” said the butler, as he retired and closed the door.

“Sir Oliver!” said Mr. Jones.

“Sir Oliver!!” said Mr. Simpson.

“Why, yes, Sir Oliver,” echoed my Uncle — “Oliver Bullwinkle — who the d—l do you take me to be?”

“Sir Oliver Bullwinkle is no more,” — said Mr. Jones.

“Sir Oliver Bullwinkle died last Friday,” — said Mr. Simpson.

“It is an infernal lie!” said Sir Oliver. “Here, Jennings! — Pyefinch, ring the bell — do ring it as hard as you can. Why, Jennings, I say, keep back the dinner — throw those two plates out of the window. — What the d—l do

you two scoundrels mean by coming to insult me in my own house ?”

“ Your own house ?” said Mr. Jones.

“ Your own house ?” screamed Mr. Simpson.

“ My own house ? ay, my own house — it is not yours, is it ? — Who are ye ? — What are ye come for ? — the spoons ? or the furniture ?”

“ Neither, Sir ; it is the books we want !”

“ Oh, my books, do ye ? Confound your impudence ! Where do ye come from, I say ? — who sent ye ? — What do ye take me for ?”

“ A madman,” whispered the alarmed Mr. Jones.

“ Must be crazy !” gasped the terrified Mr. Simpson.

“ Crazy ?” — cried Sir Oliver, “ I crazy ? — Hark ye, fellows, here stands old Oliver Bullwinkle, who, crazy or not, will never suffer himself to be called so on his own oak floor by a couple of impudent vagabonds. — Jennings ! — Tom ! — Wilkinson ! here, throw these rascals into the horse-pond.”

“ For Heaven’s sake, Sir Oliver,” interposed my mother, “ here must be some mistake !”

“For Heaven’s sake, Sir Oliver!” chimed in Miss Kitty.

The Captain said nothing, but, like the philosopher’s parrot, doubtless he “thought the more.”

“Sir Oliver?” reiterated Mr. Jones, but in a much lower key than before, “I beg pardon — I beg a thousand pardons — I mean no offence — no offence in the world. — But is Sir Oliver Bullwinkle really alive?”

The Captain nodded oracularly, for to him the appeal seemed to have been more particularly directed; and his sister exclaimed, “Alive? — why, don’t you see he is? — I wonder how any one can ask so foolish a question!”

But Mrs. Stafford, who had heard enough of the events of the morning, and began to divine how matters stood, now interfered effectually.

She first exerted all her energies, and not without success, to pacify her brother’s kindled rage, and to reassure the alarmed and astonished booksellers, for such the visitors were, who were beginning to entertain no slight apprehensions for their personal safety.

Their story was soon told—Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle, as he had styled himself, being in want of a little ready money on succeeding to his title, had obtained one thousand pounds sterling from Messrs. Jones, Palimpsest, and Gingerby, of “the Row,”—“upon account.” Mr. Jones, who had seen the library at Underdown, and knew its value, was to go down, and select from its shelves such, and so many, volumes as he might approve to the above amount, while Mr. Simpson, of the Firm of Sheepskin, Simpson, and Wiggleby, was to accompany him in the capacity of appraiser for, and on the part of, the vender.

“What inconvenience and trouble has one ‘mistake’ in a newspaper occasioned!—What a shame the editor was not more particular!”

So said Miss Pyefinch; so said Mr. Simpson—Mr. Jones said nothing, but he looked unutterable things. At length he found words enough to touch upon the one subject which was evidently nearest his heart—his thousand pounds.

“I hope, Sir Oliver, you will see the neces-

sity of letting me have the books, or of returning, or at least guaranteeing the repayment of the money ?”

“ Who, I ? — what have I to do with it ? — I pay Nick’s debts ? — I answer for his swindling tricks ? Not a stiver — never ! — let him pay it himself — if he can’t, so much the better ! — Catch him — transport him — hang him if you can — all the better ! — shall be quite delighted ——”

The head of the firm looked blank ; but a significant glance from my mother somewhat reassured him ; he had already witnessed the extent of her influence over her brother ; he was a man of the world, and knew that this was not the moment to press his suit ; so like many a profound statesman before him, he yielded to expediency, and sat down with his friend, Mr. Simpson, to partake of the Baronet’s hospitality, which, now that harmony was restored, was again freely tendered them.

As the bottle circulated after dinner, Sir Oliver got into a better humour, but his guests

failed, after all, in extracting from him anything like a "promise to pay;" and, declining the offered accommodation of a bed at the Hall, the discomfited speculators in literature at length returned to sleep at the nearest post-town, Mr. Jones consoling himself with the reflection, that he had, at all events, two strings to his bow, and that if Sir Oliver should continue obstinate, and he could once get Nicholas "within his vice," he should, in all human probability, extract from the father's fears what, it seemed, he was not to expect from his generosity.

Several minor miseries of a similar description had been inflicted on the family during the interval between the departure of Messrs. Jones and Simpson and my own arrival; — the sexton had called to "know about tolling the bell," — and the parish-clerk, who, to his ecclesiastical functions, superadded the lay occupation of an operative bricklayer, had walked up "for orders" to enforce the rotten jaws of the tomb of all the Bullwinkles to open; — these intrusions, however, had been for the most part confined to the servants' hall, and had never reach-

ed the Baronet. Still there was another and a more formidable antagonist in ambush, who yet meditated a vigorous attack upon him.

This was no less a personage than my Cousin Nicholas himself, who, repulsed as he had been in open assault from before the fortress, had since not only effected a lodgment within its outworks, under the auspices, and with the co-operation of a part of its garrison (Jennings), but was actually preparing to carry the citadel itself by a *coup de main*.

Alas ! like many an enterprising soldier before him, the General, renowned as he was in domestic strategics, for once overrated his powers, miscalculated his time, and ruined his best chance by his own precipitancy.

Sir Oliver had been stoutly assailed in the morning by my mother, who made her approaches precisely on the side where his defences were weakest,—the honour of the family.—The other debts of Nicholas he might deal with as he pleased, and leave him to suffer for his imprudence in contracting them ;—but this affair of the books looked so very like swindling, and

obtaining money under false pretences, that it was questionable whether any twelve men in "the County of Middlesex to wit," could be found clear-sighted enough to distinguish the difference; — she owned that she trembled for the result. Mr. Jones, at parting, had "right little said," but there was a something ominous in his very silence, and his eye had carried Newgate in its every glance. Jennings, too, had given her a hint that one or two odd-looking people had since been seen about the grounds.

Gracious powers! a Bullwinkle at the Old Bailey! — Shade of the immortal Roger! — that way madness lay! Open earth first, and swallow Underdown and all it contained!

Though not so wedded to "the pedigree" as her brother, Mrs. Stafford was yet sufficiently imbued with the honest pride, that exults in descending from a lineage of which "all the sons were honourable, and all the daughters virtuous;" — she would have done much, and borne much to prevent a stain upon the family, which no subsequent effort could obliterate. She thought, too, that, deserving as my Cousin was

of punishment, it should yet stop short of that excess of severity which might drive him to despair.

She implored her brother to pause, to consider the consequences which must follow the apprehension of the heir of the house on such a charge; the disgrace which, however unmerited, would infallibly attach to all connected with him.—She pressed him for her own sake,—for all our sakes, to replace the sum, and declared that, should the raising it on the instant be in the slightest degree inconvenient to him, she would joyfully advance the money herself.

“No, no, that’s not it,” returned the Baronet, a little staggered by the force of her representations,—“that’s not it,—curse the money—there is enough of it in that *bureau* at this moment to pay the trumpery sum twice over,—it is not that,—but to be choused, and bamboozled and humbugged—sell the books! Never—I’ll never forgive him—no, if he were kneeling now at my feet ——”

And there he was—there,—the most contrite, the most supplicatory of mankind in look and

action,—knelt my Cousin Nicholas !—his arms crossed upon his breast, and his eyes turned up with the expression of a male Magdalen—barring the squint.

Under the cover of a tall Indian screen, covered with little gold men in little gold funnel-shaped hats, with long gold pigtails, and longer gold fishing-rods, standing on short gold bridges, overtopped by tall gold pagodas, upon a ground whose polished japan would have put Day and Martin to open shame,—by favour of such a screen placed just within the door of his “ Snuggery,” for the purpose of preventing the draughts of Heaven from visiting the Baronet’s limbs too roughly, had Mr. Bullwinkle followed my mother unperceived, into the little room where his father usually transacted his “ Justice business,” and kept his papers ;—from the depth of this ambuscade in silence had he witnessed the progress of her intercession.

The moment he thought was at length arrived when a demonstration on his own part might effectually sustain the attack of his auxiliary.

My Cousin Nicholas was never more mistaken in his life !

The very sight of him seemed at once to bring back the ebbing ire of Sir Oliver in tremendous reflux ; all his newly-acquired mildness was dissipated in an instant, and, to use the language of the present day, “ the reaction ” was complete.

Nicholas was compelled to scud before the storm under bare poles ;—he effected his retreat indeed, but not before his father had, in the exuberance of his wrath, launched at him an *anathema* which he vowed he would never revoke but on the death-bed of one of them.

O cæca mens hominum !—little did he then think how soon—how very soon—he would have given worlds to recal it !—but let me not anticipate.

CHAPTER XI.

Last scene of all,
Which ends this strange eventful history.

SHAKSPEARE.

A LATITAT.—CONVERSATION AND EXPLANATION.—THE MID-NIGHT HOUR. — THE MORE HASTE THE LESS SPEED. — THE ECLAIRCISSEMENT. — THE DENOUEMENT. — THE FALL OF THE LEAF.—THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

ONCE more ensconced among the “Curiosities of his Museum” in the back attic, my Cousin Nicholas again lay *perdu*, disheartened, but not subdued, when a sight which he beheld from its solitary window rendered him for the moment very little inclined to quit the safe retreat afforded him by his asylum; this was the view of a travelling-carriage and four, followed by out-

riders in the Manningham liveries, and advancing rapidly along the road to the Hall.

My Cousin was just now in no humour to see company, especially when awkward recognitions might by possibility take place — he resolved to keep close in his garret, and not “be at home to anybody.”

Nor were his conjectures without foundation ; the vehicle which he beheld contained the Viscount and Fortescue, who, like myself, were brought to Underdown by the fabricated paragraph.

Astonished at having received no intelligence of so melancholy an event from his sister-in-law, and apprehensive as to the cause of her silence, Lord Manningham had come in person to condole with, and offer her his best attentions ; but the “jolly good hoax” had by this time got wind through the medium of the Jones and Birdseye gentry, and his Lordship had been undeceived as to the Baronet’s supposed decease, while changing horses at the last stage.

His arrival, however, was by no means *mal-à-propos* ; on the contrary, it appeared to act like

oil upon the billows of my uncle's wrath, and soothed him once more into something resembling a calm, though the ground-swell still continued to manifest itself for some time after. But Sir Oliver had a great respect for his noble connexion, and, if Fortescue had never ranked very high in his good graces, from the time of his "winging" my unfortunate self, still his quiet and reserved habits had prevented their coming much into contact, or ever into collision; their presence had, in consequence, a very sedative effect.

It will not be necessary to take my readers again over the same ground which we have so recently travelled together, or to speak of the astonishment of the new comers at the impudence of the forgery, their conjectures as to its author and his motives, or their congratulations on its ascertained falsehood; though all these topics were, naturally enough, brought under revision by the party, both before and after dinner. I hasten on to the narration of an event which changed, in one moment, the whole current

of our thoughts, and produced a sensation, compared with which all our previous agitation and excitement might be called tranquillity.

The evening had closed in ; my mother and Miss Pyefinch had long since sought their pillows, and I myself was preparing to retire for the night. On ascending the great staircase I encountered Fortescue, who had preceded me by a few minutes. He was evidently in waiting for me, and now made a quiet signal, in obedience to which I followed him in silence to the apartment prepared for his reception ; it was a room on the first floor, and immediately over that which my uncle used to call his “ Snuggery,” the same in which the last interview between him and my Cousin Nicholas has been recorded to have taken place.

We had left Sir Oliver and Lord Manningham deeply engaged in conversation in the Cedar parlour, which was on the other side of the house, and the door leading to which opened from the farther extremity of the Hall.

The Baronet, when I quitted the room, was a little elevated ; — either, in what he would con-

sider the due discharge of his duties as a host, he had somewhat exceeded his customary potations, or the excitement which he had previously undergone in the course of the morning had given additional effect to his usual *quantum*.—I know not how it happened, but it was very evident that his vivacity was increasing in exact proportion to the drowsiness of which his visitor began to exhibit no equivocal symptoms — symptoms which Sir Oliver, who had now got fairly astride upon his favourite hobby-horse, “the Family of the Bullwinkles,” could not, and would not, understand.

The Baronet was riding *au grand galop* — he had reached as far as Sir Geoffrey Bullwinkle, who was killed fighting *ex parte regis* at the fatal battle of Marston Moor, before his noble auditor was fairly asleep; and as his native politeness had induced the latter to listen, — or seem to listen, — as long as nature could be persuaded to countenance the venial hypocrisy, the *raconteur* did not perceive the real condition of his patient till just upon the stroke of midnight.

Fortescue and myself meanwhile were engaged

in a discussion, the *sombre* character of which suited well with “the dead hour of night” at which it was carried on.

He was looking much paler and thinner than when I had last seen him; his melancholy seemed more intense, and from the involuntary twitchings of the muscles about his mouth, his whole nervous system appeared to be more thoroughly shaken.

I adverted, in a tone of sympathy, to the fact, — he at once admitted it, and then, for the first time, I heard from his own lips an avowal of that mysterious communion which, as he was fully persuaded, continued still to exist between his own spirit and that of his departed mistress, — an intercourse which he pronounced to be at once the charm and the bane of his existence.

That he had been long since warned of some indefinite danger threatening Amelia, — that he had been incited at first to protect, and afterwards to avenge her; — that, under this overpowering influence, he had found all the ties of gratitude and humanity too weak to restrain him from his destined task—all this he now solemnly

declared to me, and that, too, with a degree of earnestness which left no doubt of his own absolute conviction of the reality of his visitation.

In vain did I endeavour to prove to him his delusion ; in vain did I appeal to his reason, and even urge the fact of his having been so entirely mistaken in the object of his vengeance, as an irresistible argument of the fallacy of his impression — it staggered him, it is true, but it did not convince him.

“ No, Charles,” he replied, “ your conclusion is a hasty one. Since the unconscious error, which was fraught with so much mischief to yourself, I have been more ill at ease than ever ;—an inward feeling seems constantly to harass and upbraid me, not more for what I have done than for what I have left unperformed ;—there seems to be a deed reserved for me, — a something yet to be executed, — what I know not, — ere the importunate demands of destiny will be satisfied, and I may rest in peace.

“ This it is which blanches my cheek and unnerves my frame. I am ever in a state of vague and unnatural excitement ; anxious I know not

why,—apprehensive of I know not what ; this it is —— ”

He paused — for a slight sound like that of a stealthy footstep seemed at this moment to proceed from the corridor.

Not desiring an eavesdropper, I rose, and opened the door, but there was no one to be seen, — all was still ; and I was about to close it again, when the great clock in the hall struck One !

Immediately after, the measured tread of Lord Manningham was heard ascending, as his servant showed him to his chamber. I listened in vain for that of my Uncle ; he did not follow, but, as I concluded, remained still below. The noise of a closing door or two was heard, and all was again silent.

We renewed our conversation, and I my arguments and persuasions.

Half an hour had perhaps elapsed, and our candles were beginning to exhibit a most disproportionate length of wick, when the ears of both of us were at once invaded by a sound proceeding from the room immediately beneath.

It was a protracted, harsh, and grating noise, as if produced by a saw or file. It ceased for a few moments, and then again commenced.

Scarcely had we time to interchange a word on the subject when its character was altered. There was a pause—a scuffle—a chair fell—then we heard the half-smothered accents of a stifled voice—it sounded like the cry of “murder !”

I rushed to the door; Fortescue, who had just before thrown off his coat, seized the travelling pistols which he had left undischarged upon the toilet, and followed in his shirt sleeves.

As I reached the head of the staircase, I made “a cannon” between Miss Pyefinch, issuing from her bed-room in her night gear, and the banisters,—we rolled down to the first landing-place most lovingly together—Fortescue sprang over our revolving bodies, and reached the hall below;—in an instant after, the crash of a door burst open,—the sound of a pistol shot,—a heavy fall—spoke of mischief—of injury—of death !

I recovered my feet in haste, and, without one word of apology to my terrified companion, rushed downwards to the hall.

Years have since rolled by, but never have I forgotten — never can I forget the scene which met my eyes.

The broad light of an autumnal moon shone full into the little chamber which I have been describing, unchecked even by the window, which was open :

In the door-way, and just within the entrance, two figures were distinctly visible, the one leaning on the other for support ; they were my Uncle Oliver and Fortescue ; — more in the interior, and towards the centre of the apartment, lay prostrate a form, which from the uncertainty of the light, there intercepted by a projecting cornice, might, or might not, be that of a human being.

My candle had been extinguished in my fall, Fortescue's had been left above, I stumbled over a third which had been stricken from the hand that bore it ; but the household was by this time alarmed, — servants were flocking in from every quarter, and Lord Manningham himself, in his *robe de chambre* appeared upon the scene of action.

My uncle Oliver was still clinging, with a

grasp convulsively tenacious, to the stalwart frame of Fortescue, who supported him as the oak supports the ivy.—On the ground, with the head towards their feet and the face to the floor, lay, indeed, the body of a man, still and motionless, while a thick, but narrow line of the deepest crimson, issuing from beneath the forehead, stagnated at the distance of a yard, in a broad and curling pool, on the surface of the stone-coloured carpet !

The lights and the company multiplied ; Sir Oliver was the first object of attention to all ; he was uninjured, save by a slight wound on the back of one of his hands, but breathless, and with his dress disordered and torn, as from a violent struggle.

The prostrate form was next examined ; it was raised from the ground, and, as the light flashed upon the inanimate and blood-stained features, Lord Manningham exclaimed — “ By Heaven ! the pretended Stafford ! ” — and I, “ My Cousin Nicholas ! — ”

“ Then it is done ! and my weird is accomplished ! ” cried Fortescue, as, extricating himself

from my Uncle's grasp, he staggered back into the hall, and sank in all the feebleness of infancy upon a chair ;—a discharged pistol fell from his hand as he spoke.

* * * *

Let me draw a veil over this horrible event, the earlier particulars of which could never be clearly ascertained, for poor Uncle Oliver, who alone could have elucidated the whole, never recovered the shock, but sank, from that fatal moment, into childish imbecility.

From Fortescue, indeed, we gathered, in after days, that, guided by the sounds from within, he had forced open the door with his foot, that he had seen Sir Oliver, exhausted, upon his knees, and a ruffian with one hand twisted in my Uncle's cravat, while the other grasped a weapon that glittered in the moonbeam, and seemed in the very act of descending on his unprotected head ;—a moment longer, and it would have been too late,—he fired, and the rescued victim staggered into his embrace, as the assassin fell without a groan — the ball had penetrated his brain.

A sharp and heavy chisel, found on the spot from which the corpse had been raised, corroborated this account, while marks of violence, corresponding with the instrument, which appeared upon the forced lock of the *bureau*, bespoke the main — let us hope the only — purpose for which it had been introduced.

Whether Sir Oliver, whose vigils, as we have seen, had been prolonged beyond his wont, had been alarmed by the noise produced in attempting his *escrutoire*, or whether he had taken it into his head to pay a casual visit to his “Snuggery,” before retiring to bed, and there encountered the intruder, cannot be known; that he had detected him in the act of breaking into his depository, was clear; it was also evident that a personal conflict—let us hope in mutual ignorance of their relative situations, — had taken place between the parties.

That Nicholas had overheard his father’s avowal, made to my mother, concerning the sums in the *escrutoire*, was almost certain; that the apparent hopelessness of any farther appeal to his exasperated father, at present, the pursuit of the

officers, and, above all, the arrival of Lord Manningham, who would be sure to recognise him, if seen,—that all these circumstances combined to make him desperate, was most probable.

In all likelihood, finding it impossible to remain long undetected in his present retreat, he had determined on possessing himself of the property which he had heard was in the *bureau*, and on putting into execution his previously avowed design of retiring for a while to the Continent, where the sums he had collected, and that which he thus expected to secure, would support him till circumstances might render his return to England safe and advisable. — The fatal result of his unprincipled attempt we have already seen.

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But little of this eventful history remains to be told; for the satisfaction, however, of those who have travelled thus far with me through the chameleon life of my unfortunate Cousin, and who may condescend to take an interest in the fortunes of those associated with him, I may be permitted to state that my poor Uncle Sir Oliver

did not survive the loss of his son many months, and never awoke to a full consciousness of his misfortune. He wasted gradually away, and, without any decided disease to which Drench could give a name, became as a blighted and a withered tree.—He ate the food set before him; but, as Miss Pyefinch often observed, “it seemed to do him no sort of good.”—He seldom spoke, and still more rarely quitted his chamber; there were times, however, when, from his inquiring glances, we fancied that he partially recognised those about him, but he never confirmed that opinion by words.

It was in the twilight of an autumnal evening, in the course of the following year, that the game-keeper’s son, a boy of fourteen, had, in the temporary absence of the family, taken his father’s gun, attracted by a flight of pigeon-fieldfares which had alighted among the berries of the shrubbery;—a projecting buttress of the building offered him concealment, and from beneath its covert he made his shot. Sir Oliver, now quite enfeebled and unconscious, as usual, of all about him, was in a room above.

At the report of the piece he sprang from his seat with a vigour, which to his attendants seemed little less than miraculous, and, with a shriek that long after rang in their ears, exclaimed,—
“ Hold ! — Hold your hand, I say ! — don’t fire ! ! ’tis my boy — ’tis Nicholas ! ”

A servant caught him as he was falling, and conveyed him to a couch, but his weary course was ended ; his heart-strings had given way — Sir Oliver Bullwinkle was dead !

Fortescue quitted England, as he declared, for ever, soon after the fatal catastrophe in which he had taken so unfortunate a share. The accident of the real insulter of Amelia having fallen by his hand, only the more strongly confirmed him in his melancholy delusion.

Without assuming the shape of decided insanity, his eccentricities became more and more apparent. We have often heard from him during his wanderings, which have extended over no inconsiderable portion of the habitable globe. Our last accounts were from India, and spoke of ill health, and increasing debility. “ He had returned,” he said, “ to Hindostan, in obedience

to a summons from Matilda, to lay his bones beside those of his early love."

Captain Pyefinch is no more ; — he did not long survive the last of the Bullwinkles ; — for the first time in his life, perhaps, a tear was seen to trickle down his cheek as he beheld his old friend and companion consigned to the " narrow house ;" and from that moment, though little alteration was to be perceived in his ever placid demeanour, yet he too seemed to grow thinner and thinner ; his nose became as sharp as a pen, and he looked as if he had no longer anybody to hold his tongue to.

His passing out of the world was, like the whole tenor of his existence in it, quiet and tranquil. One morning he did not come down to breakfast ; more marvellous still, he was absent from the dinner-table. Drench repaired to his bedside, felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, and asked him " How he found himself ?" The patient laid his hand upon his heart, looked wistfully in the doctor's face, and said—" Queer !" — " What was the matter with him ? What were his symptoms ?" — " Un-com—fort —a—ble,"

whispered the poor Captain — and expired ! — Drench is decidedly of opinion that he died of suffocation produced by the length of the polysyllable.

But Miss Kitty is yet alive, and likely to live — still devoted to the worship of the Muses, and youthful as ever — save that she has grown a little deaf.

Without abandoning the service of Polyhymnia, she has been coquetting much of late with her severer sister, who presides over Political Economy. She has become in consequence more thoroughly engrained than even of yore with the prevailing tint that marks, what the most eloquent and impassioned Auctioneer of this world, — or of any other, — once denominated “the Azure, Blue, Cœrulean vault of Heaven.”

For much of her deepened dye, she is indebted to the celebrated Dr. Olinthus Broadback, of the “Grand National Institute of Intellectual Chimney-sweepers.”

This erudite professor, in one of his itinerant excursions, undertaken for the purpose of enlightening every provincial *Ignoramus*, happened to

include Underdown in his circle, and to deliver, in the great room at the Saracen's Head, a series of lectures at the trifling charge of two-pence each person.

In the course of these interesting disquisitions, the philosopher demonstrated incontestably that the sun is *not* a soot-bag, nor the moon made of cream-cheese ; —that any opposite opinions which may have prevailed are “vulgar errors,” originally introduced by the late Lord Londonderry, and since countenanced by Sir Robert Peel and “the Tories,” for the mere purpose of “trampling” on the “useful classes.”

Miss Pyefinch was first the attentive and delighted auditor, and then the friend and correspondent of this gifted individual. Together did they walk hand-in-hand through the labyrinths of statistical lore. To her did he communicate his wonderful discoveries in all the vast variety of “inities” and “ologies”—to him did she submit her Album. Nay, it has been positively asserted that the last entry in that splendid collection of fugitive poetry is from the Doctor's own inspired pen. If Fame speaks

truth in this respect, the effusion is the more valuable, as being the only accredited specimen of his Muse, for, with all his unrivalled talents, the “ Gods have not made him poetical.” It is some vague perception of this kind, perhaps, which may have given birth to his concluding stanza, which runs thus :—

“ Hinch’em, pinch’em, barley-straw !
Nineteen pinches is the law !—
Pinch not now,—but pinch me then —
Pinch me when I rhyme again !”

A rumour has gone forth that this platonic affection is likely to end like many other platonic affections, in warmer sympathies, and to “ eventuate,” as the Doctor calls it, in a matrimonial connexion.

The only objection to this story is, that in principle the lady is avowedly become a decided Malthusian, speaks with horror of “ thoughtless procreation,” and looks forward with alarm to no very distant period when the world shall be destroyed by its human vermin, as a ripe Stilton cheese is devoured by its own mites.

She has discarded her flaxen ringlets, laughs at fashion, and is learning to smoke cigars.

In her last "Essay on Propagation," she laid it down as an axiom, that those parts of the globe where polygamy prevails are the most thinly inhabited, and thence infers that the only way to prevent excess of population is for every man to have half a dozen wives at once.—She is said to be much in the confidence of a certain Minister of State, and is grievously suspected by the Bishop of Exeter to have had a hand in framing sundry questionable clauses in the new "Poor Law Bill," which are thought to press hard on the comforts of those who "love not wisely, but too well."—I was told at the Club last Wednesday, that she is now projecting a voyage to the West Indies for the purpose of watching the progress of procreation among the emancipated Negroes.

The Reverend Josiah Pozzlethwayte has lately attained his grand climacteric. His academical labours came to an abrupt termination some few years since by the falling in of a valuable college living in a midland county, and he is now the re-

spaced mountains of Sjöman's Estate, with the village of Sjöman's attached. He is happy in the possession of a comfortable income, a very handsome, and a Housekeeper who delighted in every-minuted details.

Though no longer resident, Mr. Finnerberg is a frequent visitor at Orind, and at the last Visitation was honoured by the especial notice of his Grace the Duke of Wellington himself, that distinguished Character considering it improper, with much seeming earnestness and the necessary mystery, "to begin, who is that old-looking fellow in the way?"

So glorious a place as his long and laborious career is justly considered a subject of great commendation by his friends.

Though, though somewhat fallen into the "saw and yellow lead," as still, as are his own language, "as heavy as a buck," Charles is an excellent constitution, and never taking his own medicines. The end of his period as he says is becoming white, and somewhat well with the white shadow that makes it so his scepter; but then, per contra, his nose is wider than ever, and so man in all

Underdown has a keener relish for his glass of old port and his rubber of long whist.

He has long since retired from the active duties of his profession, and having consigned his *littera pica* to a younger hand, enjoys his *otium cum dignitate* on an adequate independence honourably acquired.

Some months before his final resolution to "throw physic to the dogs," a sharp attack of bile confined him to his room, and thirteen disbanded army surgeons came down on the outside of the "Tally-ho," and settled themselves at Underdown in anticipation of a vacancy: but the Doctor's *atomies* carried him through, and soon after his recovery he seized an opportunity of disposing of his practice to an eminent Irish professor of the healing art, inventor and sole proprietor of the "Reanimating Mineral Pill."

The fame of this celebrated *ponaxos* is now great in Underdown and its vicinity, for though two or three perverse verdicts under "crown's quest law" have recently cast a shade of suspicion on its virtues with the incredulous, yet, as its learned proprietor very classically observes, —

“Magnum sunt veritatem et prævalebit.”

Among the better disposed and more enlightened, a single bushel of these invaluable boluses is still considered as generally sufficient for the cure of all human complaints.

My noble and gallant father-in-law is receiving, in a higher and happier state of existence, the reward of a life passed here in the faithful and active discharge of every duty which they who are placed by Providence in exalted stations owe to their country and to mankind. A splendid funeral, attended by the Magnates of the land, and a monument in Westminster Abbey, erected at the public expense, were the tribute paid by his country's gratitude to his public merits. Sorrow unfeigned, and affectionate regret, were the homage, as genuine, if less ostentatious, rendered, by a large social circle, to his private virtues.

At his decease, the family honours, of course, devolved upon myself. Lady Manningham, in whom my fondest hopes have found their accomplishment, has presented me with five good-looking children, who, if not absolutely “little an-

gels," as my friend Kitty would once have called them, are well-formed, healthy, and robust.

When not detained in London by my parliamentary duties, we usually pass our time alternately at the Abbey and the Hall, which latter, together with the surrounding domain, became my property by succession, and has since been settled as the appanage of my second son, Oliver Stafford.

There are times when we have the authority of one who was himself a statesman, for believing, that "the post of honour is a private station," and though I never have shrunk, nor ever shall shrink, from doing what I consider my duty towards the country which has given me birth, I have little encouragement, and less inclination, at present to embark upon the stormy sea of politics. As a husband, a father, and a resident landlord, I have full and pleasing occupation for my time. My children are educated under my own eye, and that of their excellent mother, by a pious and learned divine of our venerable church, who officiates also as my chaplain. They are brought up in the fear of God, and the love of their

fellow-creatures ; and when we see, as we sometimes do see, in the exuberant liveliness of their animal spirits, any tendency to extravagant and practical jokes, or to self-indulgence at the expense of others, we fail not to inculcate upon them the too lightly regarded axiom, that IMPUDENCE IS NOT HUMOUR, NOR MISCHIEF WIT ; — THAT LEVITY, IF UNCHECKED BY PRINCIPLE, MAY DEGENERATE INTO VICE, AND TERMINATE IN `CRIME.'

It is our constant aim not to throw unnecessarily a damp upon the light and buoyant spirit of youthful hilarity, but to confine that spirit within the limits set by Reason and Religion ; — to check all outrageous and injurious follies, and to

“ Warn the frolic and instruct the gay,”

by setting before them in distinct, if sombre colours, the melancholy

END OF MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

BY DALTON INGOLDSBY.

GAME THE FIRST.

GAME THE FIRST.

THE BRIDE.

CHAPTER I.

————— Beware of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster that doth make
The meat it feeds on. *Othello.*

A FAMILY PARTY. — WHAT CAN HAVE BECOME OF HIM? —
A MYSTERIOUS HERO AND A DISSATISFIED HEROINE.

WITHIN the drawing-room of a spacious mansion, situated in Russell Square, sat a family party consisting of three personages.

The eldest, John Boughton, Esquire, of Lindsey Court, *in comitatu* Kent, was a spare but hale old gentleman, who might have numbered some sixty-five “or by’r Lady some seventy”

summers. His habits and his costume seemed those of a by-gone day ; he had never been known to appear in any other than a white neck-cloth, and still retained an undisguised partiality for the top-boots and leathers of the last century.

Mr. Boughton was at this moment dozing in a high-backed arm-chair ; his feet were supported by a stool, and his elbows resting respectively on those of his seat, brought the backs of his hands nearly in collision ; his head upturned, was reclining on his left shoulder ; so that his port, on the whole, afforded no very faint resemblance to that of a bandy-legged poodle begging for toast.

By his side, and presiding at the tea-table, sat a lovely girl, whose large dark eye wandered alternately towards her slumbering parent and a French clock on the mantel-piece, all regardless of an under-sized, over-aged lady, who was placed immediately opposite to her.

“ I really think I must rouse papa,” observed Miss Boughton, interrupting a somewhat hyperbolical eulogy upon the elegance of Smugs’ Chinese Emporium, which had been flowing during the last ten minutes from the lips of her confidential

friend—confiding had been, perhaps, a better epithet.

Miss Magge—that was the elderly lady's name—was one of those individuals who may be termed gossip-ducts, the mere canals through which pleasant little anecdotes are disseminated. Everybody was her “dearest friend,” and she would willingly have offered herself as a feminine Nisus to any young lady within ten miles of her who was in want of a confidante,—her *Me! me! adsum!*—would have been ready at the shortest notice.

“I must really pour out the tea,” continued Clara. “Mr. Thugg and the Colonel will be here in ten minutes, and in anything but an amiable mood if their rubber is delayed. What can have become of Major Faulkland?”

“Is no one else expected, then?” inquired Miss Magge, with an expression of slyness natural to her little fox-like countenance.

“Why, Frank said he might possibly drop in during the evening; but then, you know, he is generally so much engaged.”

“Oh! he said he might possibly drop in,

did he?" returned the elder lady. "And he is generally so much engaged, is he? Now, my dear Clara, why won't you trust me with your little secrets?—Why not unbosom yourself at once, love?—My advice and my experience might be useful."

Clara coughed very gently.

"And, after all, it's nonsense trying to dissemble. I understand—you can't deceive *me*."

Having laid a considerable stress upon the last monosyllable, Miss Magge shot at the young lady a glance of unqualified shrewdness. A good-humoured smile, however, unaccompanied even by a blush, was all the reply which her attack produced.

"Well, then," pursued the spinster, a little nettled at the slight success her assault had experienced, "all I can say is, that if you *are* waiting for Mr. Frank Sherborne, you'll have to wait some time. I have nothing more to observe."

"And why?" carelessly inquired Clara.

"Oh! he is busy,—particularly busy, I dare

say, — and likely to continue so ; — nothing more,” said Miss Magge.

“ Indeed ! ” said Clara, with a degree of interest which it was not always in the power of her visiter to excite. “ How engaged ? — how did you learn it ? — and why did you not tell me so before ? ”

“ Why, my dear,” returned Miss Magge, “ how can Mr. Sherborne’s engagements concern me ? And, of course, I couldn’t dream for a moment that they would interest any other person present.”

In order that the irony of this remark might by no possibility be overlooked, it was duly accompanied with a significant toss of the head, and as significant a curl of the nose and upper lip.

“ All I know is,” continued the little spinster, quite delighted to have struck at last upon a responsive chord, “ that on my way hither I observed Mr. Frank walking with a lady, — that is, with an individual, — in a plaid cloak, and black velvet bonnet, trimmed much like that one of mine which you admired so much last winter — you must remember it, — with the

fall of black lace. But well — where was I? Oh—I couldn't see her countenance. She held her head down; so did he—well he might—and as they appeared to be engaged in *very* earnest conversation, I did not think it right to interrupt them. — It was one of Mr. Sherborne's clients, I dare say."

"A lady!" repeated Clara, changing colour, and busying herself with the china in order to avoid the observation of her companion; a *ruse* which probably had been of little avail but that a servant at that instant announced "Major Faulkland."

"A thousand apologies for my want of punctuality," exclaimed the gentleman, advancing. "Miss Magge will pardon me, I am sure, on learning that I have been urging her suit with Lady Amelia, and, I am happy to say, with complete success. Her ladyship has empowered me to place her name at your service, as patroness of the Grand Fancy Bazaar. Lord Adolphus has also promised to be present, if possible.—But where is the enemy?—And Frank, too; he is not wont to be a loiterer."

Clara coloured, and said nothing, but turned aside to arouse the old gentleman. Miss Magge shrugged her shoulders, raised her tea-cup to her lips, and then, putting it down in the gentlest manner possible, gazed in placid abstraction upon the ceiling.

The Major, seeing in an instant the sensation which he had produced, now directed his attention to Mr. Broughton, who having jerked his nose several times in and out of a capacious shirt-frill, was by this time rubbing it (the nose), opening and shutting his eyes, and expressing an opinion of his having been “positively asleep.”

“Ah ! Major,” said he, after the process of awakening was a little further advanced, “how do ? Bless me !—almost nine. Why, Clara, I have been dozing this hour and a half. Why didn’t you make me a little coffee ?—But what has become of Frank ? ”

Poor Clara looked more confused than before, and murmured something that was not very audible, or very much to the purpose, had it been so.—Miss Magge looked triumphant.—Mr. Broughton

regarded neither, but employed himself sedulously in devouring his coffee and muffins, with the air of a man that has to make up for lost time. As for the Major, he appeared to be busily engaged in turning over the leaves of a gaily-bound album on the table. The military guest was a man apparently about twenty-seven years of age, of a fine figure, fashionable appearance, good features, whiskers of an ebon blackness, and most unexceptionable moustaches to match. The colour of his eyes was not so readily determined; they seldom met the gaze—a species of diffidence which, together with a peculiar compression of the lips, gave to his otherwise handsome countenance rather an unprepossessing expression. But the quiet elegance of his manners, and the low soft tones of his voice, quickly obliterated any unfavourable prejudice that a mere stranger might, perhaps, at first sight form of him.

The history of his host was rather a singular one. Mr. Broughton was descended from an old county family, and had passed the first forty or fifty years of his life as what is commonly termed

a gentleman-farmer, when the rapid failure of many intervening branches threw into his possession most unexpectedly the strictly entailed estates. On the acquisition of this splendid and unlooked-for fortune, he divided his time chiefly between Lindsey Court, the family seat, and a town-house in Russell Square.

Here located, he took care to provide for his only surviving child masters of every description, so that, long ere our tale commences, Clara, the young lady in question, had become a proficient in all those accomplishments most in vogue among educated females of the present day, and which are, for the most part, so well adapted to make them agreeable companions, valuable wives, and intellectual mothers; that is to say, she could read and sing both French and Italian quite as fast and as intelligibly as the professors themselves;—she could dance with the grace of a Taglioni;—surmounted the least accessible passages on the piano and guitar;—painted the prettiest and tamest little landscapes in wine-and-water colours,—and was farther suspected of some insight into German, and a

dabbling in the mysteries of chemistry ; yet, with all this, learned as she might be, Clara was a high-spirited, unaffected girl, devoted to her father, slightly attached to Mr. Frank Sherborne, and kind and good-humoured to every body.

Their circle of acquaintance was but small ; for neither the old gentleman nor his daughter was particularly fond of those melancholy congregations termed “ evening parties,” so rife in their neighbourhood ; and as the extent of their fortune was not dreamt of, they were not troubled with very many invitations. The young lady was too pretty to please the mammas ; and her father too testy perhaps, and too fond of talking about cows and cucumbers, to suit the papas. Whist was his chief delight, and herein he was mainly supported by Colonel Cooke, an elderly officer on half-pay, Major Faulkland, and Mr. Thugg, a gentleman who had acquired a vast property in India, and now lived upon ‘Change.

Frank Sherborne was almost one of the family. He was the son of Mr. Broughton’s oldest friend,

and was generally considered as his future son-in-law. Miss Magge was also a frequent guest. She resided in one of those dull and neglected streets in the vicinity of the square alluded to, where traces of commerce are only to be met with in the baker's shop and the circulating library, the sole marts which are admitted within them; from which circumstance it has been, falsely insinuated, that the inhabitants exist entirely upon rolls and romances.

This lady ran up and down stairs, and in and out of the houses of all her acquaintance, like a domestic animal, generally in the way, and always begging to be "never-minded." She was a constant annoyance to the lovers, watching them as they played *écarté*, smiling mysteriously when either "proposed," and uplifting her hands in pious horror at the equivocation, did the other "refuse."—Still was she, upon the whole, an amusing, kind-hearted, and serviceable little creature.

The clock struck nine,—a few seconds elapsed,—when a loud knock sounded at the door, and Colonel Cooke, followed by the East Indian

speculator, entered the apartment. The usual inquiries and replies having been made as to the health of the respective parties, and some undeniable propositions laid down touching the state of the weather, a short conversation followed upon the extraordinary rise in the shares of the Pan-edu-taphic, or Pleasant and Universal Burial Company, of which Mr. Thugg was a managing director, and the Colonel, and Mr. Broughton at his instance, considerable shareholders. The party then sat down to their favourite game.

The Major and Mr. Thugg opposed Colonel Cooke and their host; and fortune proved singularly unpropitious to Mr. Broughton and his partner. In vain were seats and cards changed; the luck ran steadily against them. Their opponent Major Faulkland, invariably turned up an honour, and more than once held the four in his own hand.

“It was positively disagreeable,” he vowed, “to be persecuted with such unvarying success;”—and he pocketed two or three of Mr. Broughton’s guineas with proportionate regret.

“ It *is* strange !” exclaimed the old gentleman, at length, as his friend marked another treble.

“ Very,” quietly rejoined the Major.

“ It is d—d unaccountable !” growled Colonel Cooke.

Mr. Thugg said nothing, but continued to deal on in a very business-like way.

At this moment another knock was heard,—then a quick step on the stair,—and Mr. Frank Sherborne made his appearance. This young gentleman was slight in figure, and had an open and intelligent countenance, which bore, however, on this occasion an unusually clouded aspect. He referred the lateness of his arrival to some sudden business which had unexpectedly called him to a distant part of the town, as he was on the point of setting out to join the party.

Miss Magge gave a glance of vast intelligence to Clara, who received the explanation with cold politeness. Her manner, however, became more and more distant, to the great perplexity of Frank, and to the incipient uneasiness of Miss

Magge herself, who began to fear that she had been the cause of serious mischief. In vain did she attempt to rally them into good-humour; her undisguised efforts served but to confirm the awkwardness of both. At length she determined to leave them to themselves, the best specific in these cases; so telling the Colonel that she “knew he didn’t like to be overlooked, but he need not mind her,” she drew up her chair close to the elbow of that irascible gentleman, and set herself down formally to peruse his hand.

The *tête-à-tête*, thus enforced between the pair whom she had abandoned, was, however, productive of no satisfactory issue. To the few inquiries made by Clara as to the business that had detained Mr. Sherborne, that gentleman, for the first time in his life, returned evasive and embarrassed replies. Perceiving this, she was unable to restrain the strength of those suspicions which she had hitherto kept half smothered in her bosom. For a while she endeavoured to maintain a cool reserve; but her swelling heart

rendered the attempt abortive, and casting a look of bitter reproach upon the astounded Frank, she at length muttered a few words about “not being very well,” and rushed in tears from the apartment.

CHAPTER II.

I'd as lieve ye would put ratsbane in my mouth as security !

Falstaff.

A JEW AND A GENTILE.—A HOMELY PROVERB, “FAIR WORDS BUTTER NO PARSNIPS.”—“DONE AND DONE!” ENOUGH BETWEEN GENTLEMEN.—A FANCY FAIR—NOT SO FAIR AS ONE FANCIES.—A JUVENILE INDISCRETION.—AN AWKWARD RENCONTRE.

ABOUT three weeks had elapsed since the scene which we have been describing, when one of a very different character took place, to which we shall proceed forthwith to introduce the reader.

It had struck one o'clock ; yet, although an unusually fine day, Major Faulkland's breakfast was not concluded. A cup of cold stagnant

coffee was by his side, surrounded by the usual adjuncts of a morning meal ; in addition to which, the table was furnished with a soda-water bottle or two, and a most ominous heap of legal-looking papers.

With his head resting on his hand, the Major was gazing thoughtfully on the decaying fire ; and if looks be any index to the mind, his thoughts had just then taken any rather than an enlivening turn.

Opposite to the Major sat an individual of a somewhat remarkable appearance. Though apparently not beyond the middle age, his forehead and the upper part of his head were completely bald, while a semicircle of thick black hair, almost resembling the Romish tonsure, extended to his temples, and there encountered a pair of large bushy whiskers. From beneath eyebrows which seemed to be a copy in miniature of the said whiskers, peered a couple of small, piercing, coal-black eyes ; his nose was aquiline, and the whole countenance was pervaded by a cunning, Jewish, look, which, despite an assumption of vulgar good-humour, lent it a most suspicious

and disagreeable expression. His figure, although stout, was powerful and active; and to judge from the expense and care—we say nothing as to the taste—with which it was be-dizened, it might well be supposed that in the owner's opinion, at least, grace and elegance were by no means wanting. His coat was of a bright plum-colour, surmounted by a velvet collar “to match,” and adorned with embossed gilt buttons of elaborate workmanship; a vast satin scarf, sprinkled with gay flowers, protruded from a waistcoat of a pattern equally brilliant and variegated. Around his neck hung a massive gold (?) chain, which after a meandering course, midst buttons and button-holes, finally buried itself and was lost in a pocket on the left. Tight nankeen pantaloons, and polished pumps, completed this gentleman's equipment.

“D—n it, Isaaks, the money *must* be raised!” exclaimed the Major, at length breaking silence.

Mr. Isaaks, who, with his elbows supported by his knees, was employed in balancing an expensive dress-cane across his forefingers, paused

for an instant, emitted a faint but prolonged whistle, and resumed his occupation with increased interest.

Faulkland rose hastily, strode once or twice across the apartment, then, fronting his imperturbable visiter, exclaimed,

“To make all smooth I’ll draw for two thousand, and you shall give me a brace of hundreds in rags, bottles, bones, or any other infernal ‘goods,’ as you call them, you please.”

Mr. Isaaks shook his head.

“Hell and the devil, man! what would you have?” cried Faulkland.

“Securities,” briefly replied the Jew, grinning as if he had said a very good thing.

“Come, come, nonsense!” continued the Major; “no more fooling. I *must* have the money, and you know it.—If I can but hold together for three or four months longer, little Clara’s fortune will set me square, and on that cast, remember, hangs your sole chance of regaining certain moneys advanced.—You understand me. And what, after all, is a thousand or so for such a venture? Surely my name——”

“Isn’t good for so much as a *shixpence*,” quietly chimed in Mr. Isaaks.

Faulkland coloured and bit his lip.

“No—no ; it is not to be done, Major,” continued the Jew, a cloud passing over the blandness of his countenance. “I am hit too hard already. The odds are against your ever touching a farthing of old Broughton’s. The girl may gib.—You say yourself that she has turned off one lover already, within the last month.”

“There lies my chance,” eagerly interrupted Faulkland. “This Sherborne was the sole obstacle that stood between me and Fortune.—He is removed.—A breach has been effected between him and this giddy girl, which it shall be my care to widen day by day ;—and thanks to one prating fool, I have my cue.”

“Then the old boy may run rusty,” suggested Mr. Isaaks.

“What matter’s it ?” returned the Major. “The estates are strictly entailed upon the heirs of his body, ‘lawfully begotten.’ No power on

earth can prevent Clara's coming in eventually for every acre."

"She may die, or he may marry," persevered the cautious money-lender. "A boy now would spoil all."

"Furies blight you!" exclaimed Faulkland, unable to control himself. "When money was wanted to stake at your accursed tables, it came readily enough. You would have pawned your Jewish soul to raise it.—My name was never doubted then; and now, when a few paltry hundreds more might retrieve all the thousands that your hells have swallowed, you 'll see me perish rather than try the venture.—Less, by Heaven, has driven a man to murder,"—and Faulkland clenched the knife which he had taken unconsciously from the table.

The Jew changed in an instant the bantering expression of his countenance to one stern and malignant.

"D'ye threaten me, Major Faulkland?" he cried, with fierceness,— "me who could crush you as you stand.—See this," said the Sheriff's

officer—for Mr. Isaaks was “a pluralist,” and combined that profession with those of money-lender and gambling-house proprietor,—and he pointed to a slip of paper by his side.

A momentary pause ensued, which was again broken by the Jew.

“Come, come, take it coolly, Major, and sit down. I’ll stand by you yet;—for the sake of old acquaintance you *shall* have six hundred down in cash, a hundred in champagne, and Skyscraper—you know the horse—he will be a good three hundred in your hands; and if that’s not the handsome thing, why, damme, I don’t know what is.”

This, which was intended as the “clinching” argument, did not appear to strike Major Faulkland with overwhelming force. At first he seemed inclined to expostulate. Mr. Isaaks drew on a delicate pair of “lemon kids.”

“Seven hundred, cash, and I sign,” pursued the Major.

His friend put on his hat slightly on one side, and looked at his watch.

“Give me the paper,” said Faulkland.

Mr. Isaaks pulled off his hat, removed his lemon-coloured gloves, and dropped his watch into his pocket.

The necessary deeds were signed, a portion of the sum was handed over, and arrangements were entered into for the payment of the remainder. This done, the obliging visiter, with many flourishes and obsequious bows took his departure.

“Show the gentleman out!” exclaimed the Major, ringing the bell,—“show him to——” but the door had closed and the remainder of the direction was unheard or unheeded.

* * * * *

By two o'clock on the same day all was bustle and excitement in the show-room over Mr. Smugs's emporium. Ladies of various sizes, ages, and complexions, were running down stairs, popping their heads in at the shop-door, and then running up again. Mr. Smugs's name rang from at least a dozen pair of female lips.

“What can have become of Mr. Smugs? Pray send him up.”

Mr. Smugs, however, had been "sent up" about fifty times already, and, perceiving every probability of being sent up fifty times more, he had prudently withdrawn to a *symposium* in the vicinity, leaving strict orders not to be disturbed, and abandoning the vast *emporium pro tempore* to the care and especial superintendence of his real Chinese, one Sau Li Chim,—or Jem Sawley, as he was called by those who were "inwards with him" on Sundays, and other periods of undress.

Around the private door stood three or four personages, with certain green baize bags in their possession, from which peeped out divers instruments of musical torture. Porter in "the pewter" was passed in solemn silence from one to the other, when a stout man, with a red face, white neckcloth, and dingy habiliments, exclaimed, as he transferred the empty pot to the junior of the party.

"I tell ye what, gentlemen, I can't stand these here Charity goes, and that's all about it : my constitution can't bear 'em. Hot rooms and no Heavy don't suit my complaint no hows,

I pine for the blowing breezes and the wild sea foam."

"And the brandy-and-water," interposed a young man, whose hair, face, and dingy apparel were of one and the same whity-brown hue.

"*And* the brandy-and-water, sir," repeated the stout gentleman, sharply. "Only to think," he added, in a milder and more melancholy tone, "such an uncommon fine day, and that blessed *Wenus* gone to Margate without us."

"But it pays better," suggested the young man. — A circumstance which it was not unnatural that he should regard, seeing that he had left at home a sick wife, and three young children.

"Pays!" returned the first speaker, in an accent of supreme contempt, — he was unencumbered save by his French horn. — "What if it does? — Where's the excitement, when you may blow your heart out, and not get a farden more than you agrees for. — No; give me the voluntary system: then there's a hobject in keeping up the steam."

All further reflections were cut short by the

opening of the door, and a request that "the band" would walk up, and not make a dirt on the stairs. The band accordingly wiped its shoes, and obeyed the summons.

The room which Miss Magge and Co. had engaged for a grand fancy bazaar occupied the whole first floor, above a toy-shop in the immediate neighbourhood of the Regent's Circus; it had been originally built as a concert-room by a company of speculators, who, failing in their primary object, were glad to let it out for any and for every purpose, from the Bacchanalian orgies of the club of choice spirits, down to the more sober expectorations of tea-total oratory; it was now fitted up with a great deal of taste for the occasion. Various stalls, somewhat in the shape of tents, were reared against the sides, the name of the separate proprietors depending in pink and silver blazonry over each, while the extremities of the apartment were occupied by the stations of the lady patronesses; affixed to two of which, in all the dignity of purple and gold, shone forth the names of the Ladies Theodosia Cannonbury and Smithson Smith.

The last-named of these two ladies, appareled with the utmost magnificence, had already taken up her position, and sat surrounded by a committee of obsequious juniors. She was in every respect a very great personage, the spouse of a gallant knight, and weighed from thirteen to fourteen stone. Sir Smithson Smith had originally been in the Italian warehouse line; but had nobly won his spurs by presenting a civic address on the departure of a fit of royal indigestion. No sooner had plain Mistress been metamorphosed into the no less plain Lady Smithson Smith, than her husband was *induced*, by a system of matrimonial persuasion, to relinquish the superintendence of pickles, French mustard, and macaroni, and to make over the retail business to his eldest son. Meanwhile, the lady abandoned herself to the cultivation of "Shakspere, Taste, and the Musical glasses." On the present occasion she had kindly consented to act as patroness of a "grand fancy bazaar," the proceeds of which were to be applied to the benefit of the "juvenile and oppressed chimney-sweeps" of the Metropolis.

Her Ladyship was now listening with great condescension to a long history from Miss Magge touching the arrangements made, the profits to be calculated on, and the assemblage expected of rank and fashion, &c. &c.

“ And, what do you think,” said the latter, in conclusion, “ I have got to arouse their sensibilities when they do come ? ”

Lady Smithson graciously declared that “ She had not the most remotest idea.”

“ What should you say ? ” continued Miss Magge, with a triumphant look around,—“ what should you say to a couple of dear little real juvenile oppressed chimney-sweeps to stand at the door ? ”

“ Goodness gracious preserve me ! ” ejaculated the lady patroness, in the most unaffected alarm. “ You don’t mean to say we are to have any nasty dirty little boys running about the premises ? — the odious filths ! — I can’t endure them ! ”

Miss Magge hastened to explain to the alarmed lady that her “ specimens ” had been previously parboiled in soap and water ; that their

habiliments were not to be really sooty, but only “make-believe ;” and farther, that they were both to be furnished with clean shirts, “turn-down collars,” black silk stockings and mourning gloves.

“The band” now—who were almost smothered in an arbour of evergreens, — struck up a set of quadrilles with great spirit and independence ; the doors were thrown open, and Miss Magge hastened to place an oppressed chimney-sweep on either side of the entrance. Each of these interesting young personages distributed to the visitors glazed cards, on which were described in pathetic terms and gilt letters, the narrowness of chimneys, the tyranny of master-sweeps, and all the complicated horrors of the present climbing system.

As the rooms began to fill, the young ladies were soon engaged in exhibiting purses, card-racks, and every description of those elaborate trifles which enable the idle and the wealthy to display their charity (?) at the expense of certain widows and orphan daughters of half-pay officers and country curates, who derive a scanty

subsistence from the construction of such knick-knacks, and of whom scores are thrown out of bread for six weeks to come by every "Fancy Fair." — We say nothing of the exhibition of their own sweet persons, at the moderate rate of two and sixpence a head.

Clara stood listlessly by the stall of her friend, Miss Magge, having been prohibited by her father from taking any active part in the "humbug," as he most irreverently termed this laudable retailing of small wares. A pensive expression had stolen over her fine and gentle countenance, and though an answering smile would sometimes faintly respond to the ecstasies of her friend on putting off a twopenny pincushion for "two and sixpence," or the happy disposal of a pair of eleemosynary shirt-buttons, it was evident that her thoughts were far away.

A couple of hours had slipped away, when a slight commotion at the lower end of the apartment indicated the arrival of Lady Theodosia Cannonbury, accompanied by her brother and Major Faulkland. The latter having presented Clara, Miss Magge, and Mr. Broughton, to his

distinguished friends, was next compelled to perform the same kind office for Lady Smithson Smith, who had bustled up, followed by her son.

This young gentleman, although celebrated on ordinary occasions among his intimates for his nonchalance and unstudied demeanour, showed symptoms of considerable embarrassment in his present position. He endeavoured to twist his moustache with an air of unconcern. As the said moustache, however, was somewhat scant of growth, and not to be trifled with, he had recourse to a head of very intractable hair, still without obtaining any decided relief. In vain did he summon that self-possession by which he was so distinguished at the "Coal Hole," and other places of fashionable resort; when the moment of introduction arrived, he felt, as he subsequently declared, in his own peculiar phraseology, "all hookem snivey, and no mistake."

No sooner had Lady Theodosia taken her appointed station than the crowd gradually drew towards that quarter of the room. The Greg-

sons and the Dugsons were companionless ; — the Johnsons and Thompsons looked affable in vain ; — the Hobbes's, the Dobbs's, and the Snobbs's were alike forsaken. — Even Lady Smithson Smith sat in solitary grandeur.

Faulkland seized this opportunity of prosecuting his suit with Clara. Leading the conversation to the late rarity of Sherborne's visits to Russell Square, and touching on a change in his manners which had been observed by more than one of his acquaintance, the Major kindly proceeded to extenuate his conduct.

“ Frank was very young,” he said ; “ the temptations of London were so numerous ; and so strong ; — it was necessary for a man to see something of life ; — he would be all the steadier for it by and by.”

The Major watched with satisfaction the working of offended pride which he saw was going on in the fair girl's countenance, and proceeded the more earnestly in his friend's *defence*.

“ Really, Major Faulkland,” exclaimed Clara

at length, "you give yourself much unnecessary trouble in explaining your friend's conduct. — Mr. Sherborne may spend his time where and how he pleases. — I have neither the right nor the inclination to pry into his pursuits."

The Major sighed, and observing a tear gathering in the eye of his companion, gently took her hand.

"Pardon me, my dear Miss Broughton," he said, in a low soft tone, "if I am not as readily, as I would willingly be, deceived by this indifference; but, no,—it shall be my aim to restore to you, if possible, one in whose happiness your own is so materially involved."

At this moment, Mr. Smithson Smith, who had regained much of his usual composure, stepped up, and, gathering a coat-tail gracefully under each arm, expressed his opinion that Fancy bazaars appeared to him, the said Smithson Smith, to be infernally slow proceedings.

"Sir," said Major Faulkland, with any but an encouraging glance.

"Slow," repeated Mr. Smith, colouring, and

dropping his coat-tails ; — “ that is — I mean seedy — heavy, you know ? — uncommon heavy — you understand ? ”

“ Not exactly, sir,” returned Faulkland, with gravity ; “ but the gentlemen whom you have just quitted very possibly may.”

Before Mr. Smithson Smith could fully comprehend the hint thus significantly delivered, a disturbance at the door attracted universal attention, and he bounded off accordingly to discover “ what was the row ? ”

Entreaties for mercy were now heard, interspersed with solemn invocations of the police. Every one hurried to the spot where one of the little oppressed chimney-sweeps was discovered struggling in the grasp of the inexorable Mr. Thugg.

It appeared upon inquiry that as that gentleman was entering the room, he discovered a hand of the individual in question inserted in his own coat-pocket ; and, not being remarkable for much delicacy of sentiment, he forthwith transferred the little interesting, oppressed juvenile, to the

guardianship of a policeman, despite the passionate remonstrances of Miss Magge, and her declarations that "there must have been some mistake."

"I'm not to be done, ma'am!" said the unmoved Thugg. — But done he was, as he discovered some few minutes after, to his utter dismay, — done, out of a gold watch, chain, and seals. A fact which he connected with the sudden disappearance of the other little "victim," who from the moment of his companion's arrest had disappeared, and was

"Like the lost Pleiad, seen on earth no more."

During this little fracas, Lady Theodosia and Lord Adolphus had contrived to effect their escape uninterrupted. The Eastern dignitary, indeed, alone observed the departure, and she was much too anxious for the recovery of her own apostate subjects to oppose any bar to it.

Shortly afterwards, the Broughtons, accompanied by Faulkland, who had dined with them, took their leave, the old gentleman grumbling

all the way down stairs at the unceremonious appropriation of a ten-pound note which he had tendered at a stall on purchasing a two shilling watch-guard. Lady Smithson, the illustrious *marchande*, received it with a most bewitching smile, dropped him a most bewitching curtsy, and, deeming that probably an equivalent for the balance, thanked him for his liberality, with an intimation that they “never gave change.”

Mr. Broughton was all amazement,* but prudently confined his indignation to a prolonged series of muttering ; from which, however, it might be gathered, that he was instituting in his own mind a comparison between the respective claims of the Lady Patroness and the Chimney-sweep to “a month on the mill.” As for Miss Magge, nothing could seduce that enthusiastic

* The heir of a noble house, “fat, fair,” but considerably under “forty,” is said to have been perfectly *consterné* at a similar intimation. In vain did he represent that he could not afford to lose “the difference,” being, as he averred, “the Prodigal Son.” The fair tradeswoman, who had so charitably sold him his “bargain,” only smiled and said, he looked much more like the “Fatted Calf.”

personage from the field, while a single young gentleman remained to be coaxed or shamed out of his solitary half-sovereign.

During the drive home the presence of the dissatisfied purchaser prevented any renewal of the conversation that had been so inopportunately disturbed by young Mr. Smith ; but as the carriage, which had somewhat diverged from the direct route homewards for the sake of a drive round the Regent's Park, emerged from the Circus at the extremity of Portland Place, Faulkland suddenly pressed his fair companion's arm, and directed her attention to two persons then in the act of crossing the New Road.

'Twas he, indeed !—Her worst fears were realised. —Frank Sherborne was before her, and a female was hanging with seeming affection upon his arm.

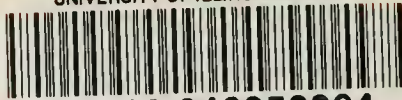
Clara sank back, and hid her crimsoning face in her hands. She felt bewildered, stunned by the blow ; and among the confused images that crowded upon her brain, the form of her newly-found rival was ever recurring. There was some-

thing in that person's air, that struck strangely upon her recollection. More than once did she endeavour to grapple with it, but, like some dimly-remembered dream, it fled intangible; still some chord of memory, long untouched, had been partially awakened, and the dying tone yet lingered on her ear.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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